

**BEFORE
THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD**

In the Matter of the Application of Atlanta Farms Solar)
Project, LLC for a Certificate of Environmental)
Compatibility and Public Need to Construct a Solar-) Case No: 19-1880-EL-BGN
Powered Electric Generation Facility in Pickaway)
County, Ohio.)

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

Emily Truebner

Vice President Permitting and Environmental

**on behalf of
Atlanta Farms Solar Project, LLC**

October 29, 2020

Christine M.T. Pirik (0029759)
(Counsel of Record)
William Vorys (0093479)
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1 **1. Please state your name, current title, and business address.**

2 My name is Emily Truebner. I am the Vice President of Permitting and Environmental for
3 Savion, LLC (“Savion”). My business address is 422 Admiral Boulevard, Kansas City,
4 Missouri 64106.

5
6 **2. Please summarize your educational and professional experience.**

7 I received a Bachelor of Science from Colorado State University with a major in Geology
8 and I have over 20 years of environmental science related experience, including 15 years
9 working as an environmental consultant supporting due diligence efforts for various clients
10 across multiple sectors. In 2015, I began working for Tradewind Energy, Inc.
11 (“Tradewind”) permitting renewable energy projects. In 2019, Savion was formed when
12 Macquarie’s Green Investment Group acquired the solar and energy storage unit of
13 Tradewind. At that time, I transitioned from Tradewind to Savion. In my role at Savion,
14 I oversee permitting and environmental for an over 10 gigawatt-sized portfolio of utility
15 scale solar and energy storage projects.

16
17 **3. On whose behalf are you offering testimony?**

18 I am testifying on behalf of the Applicant in the case, Atlanta Farms Solar Project, LLC
19 (“Atlanta Farms” or “Applicant”). Atlanta Farms is a wholly owned subsidiary of Savion,
20 LLC and Savion is owned by Macquarie’s Green Investment Group.

21
22 **4. What is your role with respect to the Project?**

23 In my position as Vice President of Permitting and Environmental, I oversee and manage
24 all facets of project planning and development for the Atlanta Farms Project (“Project”). I
25 oversee the permitting process and the production of the various studies required to
26 complete the Application before the Ohio Power Siting Board (“Board”) for the Project’s
27 certification as a solar-powered electric generation facility.

28
29 **5. Please state the purpose of your testimony.**

30 The purpose of my testimony is to provide a summary of the Atlanta Farms Project and a
31 description of the process that led to the Joint Stipulation and Recommendation

1 (“Stipulation”), which was filed in the docket on October 29, 2020, and is being offered in
2 this proceeding as Joint Exhibit 1. I will sponsor the admission of the Stipulation into
3 evidence in this case, along with the Applicant’s exhibits listed in the Stipulation, which
4 include the Application and supplements, the Applicant’s responses to data requests from
5 the Board’s Staff (“Staff”), certificates of service, and proofs of publication. I intend to
6 explain the background of the Stipulation and the reasons why I believe it should be
7 adopted by the Board. In addition, my testimony will confirm that the Stipulation complies
8 with the Board’s three-part test for evaluating stipulations.

9
10 **6. Is the Application and all exhibits attached to the Application, as well as the**
11 **supplements and responses to data requests, true and accurate to the best of your**
12 **knowledge?**

13 Yes, they are.

14
15 **7. Did Atlanta Farms cause the Application and notices to be served on property owners,**
16 **tenants, adjacent property owners, various local government officials, and libraries?**

17 Yes. The certificates of service were filed and have been marked as Applicant Exhibits 14,
18 and 16-18.

19
20 **8. Did Atlanta Farms have notices of the public information meetings, the Application,**
21 **and the hearings published in a newspaper of general circulation in Pickaway County,**
22 **Ohio?**

23 Yes. Proofs of publication were filed and have been marked as Applicant Exhibits 15, and
24 17-18.

25
26 **9. Please provide a summary and overview of the proposed facility.**

27 Atlanta Farms proposes to construct the Project, a new solar-powered energy facility
28 located within approximately 2,276 acres of land secured by landowner agreements in Deer
29 Creek and Perry Townships, Pickaway County, Ohio. The Project will have a nameplate
30 capacity of up to 199.6 megawatts (“MW”) alternating current and will include
31 photovoltaic solar panels (“modules”) mounted on a racking system to maximize solar
32 energy capture and electric generation of the array. The Project will tie into an existing

1 adjacent substation that connects to the regional transmission grid. Electricity generated
2 by the modules is sent to inverters located throughout the array. A series of underground
3 and overhead electric collection lines will collect and transfer the electricity from the
4 inverters to the Project substations.
5

6 **10. Please provide the background on the process leading up to the Stipulation and the**
7 **evidentiary hearing.**

8 The Staff issued a Staff Report of Investigation on October 7, 2020 (“Staff Report”). A
9 virtual local public hearing was subsequently held on October 22, 2020. The Stipulation,
10 which was signed by the Applicant, Staff, and the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (“OFBF”),
11 was filed on October 29, 2020. The virtual evidentiary hearing is scheduled to commence
12 November 4, 2020.
13

14 The Applicant did not detect any major issues or hurdles during Staff’s investigation of the
15 Application. Since the submission of the Application, we responded to questions from
16 Staff and filed our responses in the docket. Those responses are marked as Applicant
17 Exhibits 4 through 13. We do not have concerns with the Staff Report. Note that the
18 OFBF is the only intervenor in this case and has been involved in the development of and
19 discussions regarding the Stipulation.
20

21 **11. Did you encounter any objections to the Atlanta Farms Project from the officials in**
22 **the area?**

23 No. The Applicant has been working in Pickaway County and meeting with landowners
24 regarding the Atlanta Farms Project facilities for four years. Throughout this time, we have
25 formed strong relationships with local landowners, as well as county officials.
26

27 **12. Did you attend the local public hearing held on October 22, 2020?**

28 Yes.
29
30

13. **What has the Applicant done to address and respond to the comments raised at the local public hearing?**

Ten individuals offered sworn testimony during the local public hearing: six testimonials were supportive of the Project; three were opposed; and one requested information regarding potential impacts to amateur radio operations from the Project.

The testimonials that were opposed to the Project were provided by Ms. Riddle, Ms. Davey, and Ms. Heath. Ms. Riddle lives approximately 4.5 miles from the Project and Ms. Davey, Ms. Riddle's mother, lives approximately 1.5 miles from the Project. Both individuals expressed concern regarding farmland preservation. Ms. Moser, the lead developer for the Project, has met with both ladies on numerous occasions to discuss the Project and their concerns, including a one-on-one meeting on December 18, 2019. During that meeting, the topic of farmland preservation was discussed in detail. As a farmer, Ms. Moser provided a unique perspective on the matter, including that renewable energy can provide a guaranteed source of income for farmers over the life of the Project and, in some cases, a means for farmers to keep land in their family and sustain farming operations on their remaining land. In addition, the Project will be decommissioned at the end of its useful life and the land can go back into traditional agricultural use.

Ms. Heath lives adjacent to the Project boundary, but over three-quarters of a mile (4,040 feet) east of the nearest Project solar panels. During her testimonial, Ms. Heath expressed concerns regarding potential environmental and health and safety impacts from the Project, as well as farmland preservation. Ms. Moser has also met with Ms. Heath on numerous occasions to discuss the Project and her concerns.

In his testimonial, Mr. Funk expressed concern regarding potential impacts to amateur radio operations as a result of the Project. Ms. Moser reached out to Mr. Funk after the local public hearing and discussed his question. In general, the magnetic effects from utility scale solar projects, which could disrupt communication systems, are expected and known to be negligible beyond 330 feet from the source. The Project is setback from property lines and the components that generate electromagnetic fields (i.e., inverters) are

1 located on the interior of the facility, at least 300 feet from the closest property line.
2 Therefore, amateur radio system disruption is not expected as a result of the Project.
3 The Applicant has a demonstrated record of community engagement in the Project area,
4 including: meeting with individuals and groups to discuss the Project; working closely with
5 Pickaway County to execute a payment in lieu of taxes ("PILOT") agreement; and
6 coordinating with nearby homeowners on a Good Neighbor Initiative Agreement that
7 provides an option for a residential solar power system.
8

9 **14. Have you reviewed the Stipulation that was filed in this docket on October 29, 2020?**

10 Yes.
11

12 **15. Are you aware that the Board must make certain determinations under Ohio Revised**
13 **Code ("R.C.") 4906.10 before issuing a certificate for the construction, operation, and**
14 **maintenance of a major utility facility?**

15 Yes. My attorney has advised me that there are eight criteria considered by the Board in
16 making its determination for the issuance of a certificate.
17

18 **16. Does the first of these criteria under R.C. 4906.10(A)(1), which requires the Board to**
19 **determine the basis of need for the facility, apply to the Board's review of this**
20 **Application?**

21 No. My attorney has advised me that R.C. 4906.10(A)(1) only applies to an electric
22 transmission line or a gas pipeline, and is not applicable to this generating facility.
23

24 **17. Does the Application, as agreed to through the Stipulation, enable the Board to**
25 **determine the nature of the probable environmental impact of the facility?**

26 Yes. The Application addresses all of the subject matter areas necessary for the Board to
27 determine the nature of the probable environmental impact of the Project. The Application
28 includes detailed surveys, assessments, and reports related to probable socioeconomic
29 impacts, ecological impacts, and public services, facilities, and safety. The Application
30 narrative and exhibits, along with supplements and data request responses, provide the
31 information necessary to determine the probable impacts.

1
2 **18. Does the Application, as agreed to through the Stipulation, enable the Board to**
3 **determine that the facility represents the minimum adverse environmental impact,**
4 **considering the state of available technology and the nature and economics of the**
5 **various alternatives, and other pertinent considerations?**

6 Yes. The information included in the Application and the Stipulation enables the Board to
7 determine the probable adverse environmental impact, and shows that the Project has a
8 minimum adverse environmental impact.
9

10 **19. Does the Application, as agreed to through the Stipulation, enable the Board to**
11 **determine that the facility is consistent with regional plans for expansion of the**
12 **electric power grid, and of the electric systems serving this state and interconnected**
13 **utility systems, and that the facility will serve the interests of electric system economy**
14 **and reliability?**

15 Yes. The regional plans for expansion of the electric power grid and of the electric systems
16 serving the state are determined by PJM Interconnection, LLC ("PJM"). PJM performed
17 studies analyzing the proposed facility, its proposed interconnection point, and the related
18 impacts on the electric power grid. PJM concluded that no reliability violations would
19 occur.
20

21 **20. Does the Application, as agreed to through the Stipulation, enable the Board to**
22 **determine that the facility will comply with the requirements established by the State**
23 **of Ohio for air pollution control, solid and hazardous waste, water pollution control,**
24 **permitting for a major increase in withdrawal of waters, and aeronautical**
25 **requirements?**

26 Yes. The Application addresses air pollution topics, revealing that the proposed Project
27 would not produce air pollution through emissions. The Application addresses solid and
28 hazardous waste, revealing that the proposed Project would not produce solid or hazardous
29 waste.
30

21. **Does the Application, as agreed to through the Stipulation, enable the Board to determine that the facility will serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity?**

Yes. The Application addresses the public interest, convenience, and necessity through discussion and analysis of topics such as, but not limited to: the socioeconomic impacts of the Project; the extensive public engagement efforts taken throughout the development of the Project; the guarantee for liability insurance; the decommissioning plan; the complaint resolution process; the discussion of health and safety; and the landscape plan. Discussion of these topics, as well as others, as presented in the Application and Stipulation, enable the Board to determine that the facility will serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

22. **Does the Application, as agreed to through the Stipulation, enable the Board to determine the facility's impact on the viability of agricultural land?**

Yes. The Application identifies the agricultural land within the Project Area (2,160 acres) and the land use impact (1,375 acres) the Project will have on agricultural land. The Application also identifies four Project parcels totaling 157 acres that are enrolled in the Agricultural District program: C0900010001400, I2000010029100, I2000010029300, and I2000010029400. Once the Project is operational, these parcels will no longer be eligible for inclusion in the program. However, once the Project is decommissioned, the parcels could be re-enrolled in the program.

A review of Pickaway County records and the title work completed for the Project parcels, indicates that there are no Ohio Department of Agriculture or other conservation easements associated with the Project.

23. **Does the Application, as agreed to through the Stipulation, enable the Board to determine that the facility incorporates maximum feasible water conservation practices, considering available technology and the nature and economics of the various alternatives?**

Yes. As a solar-powered electric generation facility, water is not utilized in the generation process. The only water usage associated with the facility will be the potable water used

1 for operation and maintenance. As this represents similar water usage as a residence or
2 commercial building, the water usage does not warrant specific conservation practices.

3
4 **24. Are you aware that the Board utilizes a three-part test to evaluate stipulations?**

5 Yes.

6
7 **25. With regard to the first part of the Board's three-part test for stipulations, do you**
8 **believe that the settlement was the product of serious bargaining among capable,**
9 **knowledgeable parties?**

10 Yes. Counsel for all parties were invited to all settlement negotiations. Representatives of
11 the parties involved in the deliberations leading to the Stipulation were aware of and
12 knowledgeable about the issues addressed in the Stipulation.

13
14 **26. With regard to the second part of the Board's three-part test for stipulations, do you**
15 **believe the settlement, as a package, benefits the public interest?**

16 Yes. The Stipulation ensures that the Project will represent the minimum adverse
17 environmental impact for both construction and operation, considering the state of
18 available technology, and the nature and economics of the various alternatives, as well as
19 other pertinent considerations. The construction and operation of the facility then provides
20 benefits to the public interest.

21
22 The Project will help meet Ohio's demand for in-state carbon free energy resources. The
23 Project will generate electricity using virtually no fuels or water and with effectively zero
24 air emissions and waste generation. This Project is intended to fill the need for a more
25 diverse national energy portfolio that will include a higher percentage of energy generated
26 through use of renewable resources.

27
28 Public interest will also be met through the positive economic impact the Project will have
29 on the local economy through construction spending and jobs, and an annual service
30 payment in lieu of taxes ("PILOT"). It is estimated that the Project will create 880 jobs in
31 the state of Ohio, 573 jobs in Pickaway County during construction, and 3 to 4 jobs during

1 operations. The PILOT was approved by Pickaway County on October 20, 2020, and will
2 result in an annual service payment of \$7,000 per MW or \$1,400,000 that will benefit local
3 governments and school districts.
4

5 **27. With regard to the third part of the Board's three-part test, to your knowledge, does**
6 **the settlement package violate any important regulatory principle or practice?**

7 No.
8

9 **28. Do you have any other comments?**

10 Yes. The Applicant is appreciative of the efforts Staff has made in processing this
11 Application, culminating in the issuance of the Staff Report. In addition, the Applicant
12 would like to thank the OFBF for its participation in the case, as well as local community
13 leaders in Pickaway County, and the community itself for all of their participation in this
14 process.
15

16 **29. Does this conclude your testimony?**

17 Yes. However, I reserve the right to update this testimony to respond to any further
18 testimony, reports, and/or evidence submitted in this case.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The Ohio Power Siting Board's e-filing system will electronically serve notice of the filing of this document on the parties referenced in the service list of the docket card who have electronically subscribed to these cases. In addition, the undersigned certifies that a copy of the foregoing document is also being served upon the persons below this 29th day of October, 2020.

/s/ Christine M.T. Pirik

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Summary: Testimony - Direct Testimony of Emily Truebner electronically filed by Christine M.T. Pirik on behalf of Atlanta Farms Solar Project, LLC