

From: [Ohio Power Siting Board](#)
To: [Puco Docketing](#)
Subject: comment for 20-1605 [ref: _00Dt0GzXt._500t0cCmmb:ref]
Date: Friday, November 13, 2020 10:13:46 AM

Dear Ohio Governing Board,

This writing is to inform you of the many concerns that I, and the surrounding community, have with regards to the Birch Solar Farm project. This project will encompass 2,600 - 3,900 acres of current farmland; land that is surrounded by rural residents in a more densely populated area than any other Lightsource BP project to date. The impact of this project will be great and affect more people than any Lightsource BP project has previously. This raises many concerns about the validity of the information they are presenting. How can they be sure of the environmental and community impact of this project if they have not managed a project of this scale in a community with this population density? The following is a list of concerns.

Property valuation

Currently, no studies exist to show the impact this project will have on home values in the area. This is specifically because no solar farms exist near a community of this size.

Light pollution

How will this farm be illuminated at night for security purposes? Many homeowners will potentially be disturbed by the effects of any additional lighting that may change our views of the countryside around us. Views that are a major draw for the people living in this area.

Run off control

Currently, this is farmland with drainage tiles maintained by the landowners. How will the water run-off be affected in this area with the addition of such a vast area of impenetrable surface? How many drainage tiles will be damaged during construction? Will the landowners or Lightsource BP be responsible for any changes in run-off and resulting flooding of adjacent land? This is an area where flooding is already a concern during periods of high rain. How can the Board greenlight this project without ample time for proper studies to be done to determine to effects of such a drastic change to the landscape?

Wildlife impact

Currently, this open farmland is home to many native species of Ohio. With 2,600 – 3,900 acres changed to solar farm, the addition of fencing to surround such a large area will have an enormous impact on the local wildlife. This will severely impact the ability of wildlife to safely traverse the area, forcing more animals to the roadways and limiting their access to safe food sources. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons are making a return to this area as well. How will the addition of 2,600- 3,900 acres of solar panels affect their ability to hunt and safely breed in this area? Again, the size of this project in an area like ours has never been undertaken. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has conducted an initial review of the area to be impacted and has found that five endangered species of bats, two endangered and one threatened species of river mussels, one endangered and one threatened species of fish, and two endangered species of birds located in the area will be directly impacted by the proposed project. They also recommend that more studies be done to determine if it is safe to proceed. More time is needed to study the impact on wildlife before you can responsibly greenlight a project of this size.

Destruction of farmland

This area is home to some of the best farmland Ohio has to offer. This is not “brown fields” where other solar projects have had success, but rather fertile, top-producing farmland. Land that will be taken out of production for a minimum of twenty years. With solar being such a new industry, there is no guarantee that this land will be viable farmland after the lease period has ended. Why take up such rich farmland when other options are available and have shown success?

Final clean-up

The removal and disposal of solar panels is a very strictly regulated operation due to the toxic chemicals within the panels. Will Lighthouse BP be responsible for this at the end of the lease – or will the landowners? This has potential to cause a situation where they are not disposed of properly, or at all, causing more environmental impact related to heavy-metals and resulting pollution of the breakdown of these panels.

Tornado concerns

We live in an area prone to strong storms and tornadoes. Ohio had 46 tornadoes during 2019. The damage that will be caused by these storms to the panels would be devastating to this land. Damage from flying glass and metal, as well as the environmental damage from broken panels are truly concerning in light of storm frequency.

I implore you to take these points into account when deciding the fate of this area. This is a beautiful rural community with families, homes, and neighbors. This is no place for an industrial farm of this immense size. This farming community does not deserve or desire to be Lightsource BP’s “guinea pig”. As the only governing body in Ohio with the authority to grant or deny these projects, please do the right thing and protect the community and wildlife that this project will destroy.

Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Mescher 

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I am against the Birch Solar field proposed in Allen & Auglaize Counties. This has not been properly vetted and notified of any property change to the Townships. The consequences against the adjoining residential properties and the affect against wildlife is detrimental to the survival of natural resources in the area. There is no concrete evidence that water tables and drainage will not be harm significantly. Please Do Not provide a permit for this project.

Andrew S Farley 

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It has been brought to our attention that a solar field may be in our backyards and for many residents, their front yards. I'm not sure how it is being ignored, the amount of residents this will affect. This project is massive in comparison to many others in Ohio, that affect a smaller number of residents. I understand that "Green Projects" have to be done to help the "greater good." However, a Solar Field of this magnitude, should be further out, in a much more rural area! 10s of 1000s of residents will be forced to accept the devaluing of their properties and their health. I live in a suburb adjacent to this project and have city water. However, there are so many that depend on their wells. You can't tell me that these panels won't affect their water, in turn affecting their health. What about the radiation these panels emit? Again, there are too many residents living within a 1/2 a mile to this projected solar field. Turbines are one thing but these panels, in such a large area, close to so many residents, WILL BE detrimental to the community and our wildlife.

Shawnda Gearing 

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Summary: Public Comment Public Comment filed by Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Mescher, Andrew S Farley, Shawnda Gearing via website electronically filed by Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing