

BEFORE THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

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In the Matter of the :
Application of Madison :
Fields Solar Project, LLC, :
for a Certificate of :
Environmental :
Compatibility and Public : Case No. 19-1881-EL-BGN
Need issued to Construct :
an Electric Generation :
Facility in Madison :
County, Ohio. :

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PROCEEDINGS

before Ms. Megan Addison and Mr. Matthew Sandor,
Administrative Law Judges, and Director Mary Mertz,
Ohio Power Siting Board, via Webex, called at 6:00
p.m. on Thursday, December 3, 2020.

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- - -

1 APPEARANCES:

2 Dickinson Wright PLLC
3 By Ms. Christine M.T. Pirik
4 and Mr. William V. Vorys
5 150 East Gay Street
6 Columbus, Ohio 43215

7 On behalf of the Madison Fields Solar
8 Project, LLC.

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Thursday Evening Session,
December 3, 2020.

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ALJ ADDISON: Good evening and welcome, everyone. My name is Megan Addison and with me is Matthew Sandor. We are Administrative Law Judges in the Legal Department of the Ohio Power Siting Board, and we've been assigned by the Board to this proceeding.

One of the duties as the Administrative Law Judges assigned by the Board includes conducting a public hearing in Case No. 19-1881-EL-BGN which involves the application filed by Madison Fields Solar Project, LLC, for a Certificate to Construct a Solar-Powered Electric Generation Facility in Madison County, Ohio. From now on I will just refer to the project as the project.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency that remains in effect under Executive Order No. 2020-01D which was issued by the Governor of Ohio and consistent with Amended Substitute House Bill 197, today's hearing is being held through Webex which enables interested persons to offer testimony on the proposed project by telephone or video via the internet. The hearing is also being live streamed at

1 www.youtube.com/user/pucoh.

2 Before we get started with the public
3 hearing, I would like to address some preliminary
4 issues. First, if you experience technical
5 difficulties during the hearing, there are several
6 options to address the issue. If you -- if your
7 internet connection drops at any point, you can try
8 to join Webex again by video, or you can participate
9 by phone. If those options are unsuccessful, please
10 call the Board's Legal Department at (614) 466-6843
11 immediately for assistance.

12 Finally, if you merely wish to listen to
13 the hearing using your phone instead of accessing via
14 Webex on the internet, you can view the live stream
15 on the YouTube channel, or you can listen to the
16 hearing by dialing 1-408-418-9388 and entering
17 meeting No. 1736246802.

18 More information about the Webex
19 technical help options can be obtained through the
20 chat feature which will be available throughout the
21 hearing. You may click on the chat button at any
22 time to obtain technical assistance or to ask
23 procedural questions during the hearing. The chat
24 feature should not be used for any other purpose such
25 as to offer comments about the proposed project that

1 is the subject of today's hearing. Please be aware
2 that chats are recorded and should not be considered
3 private. Chats are also not part of the official
4 record for this case.

5 As indicated by the entry of
6 September 28, 2020, witnesses were to register to
7 testify. Individuals who have registered to provide
8 testimony should be ready to speak when we read their
9 name from the registration list. Individuals who are
10 commenting by video will be unmuted by a Board staff
11 member when it is time for their testimony. If you
12 are providing your testimony by telephone, a Board
13 staff member will call you at the phone number you
14 provided when it is your turn to testify.

15 Please bear with us as we work to queue
16 up each individual which may take some time. It also
17 may divert our attention at times from what is
18 happening in the hearing. If this happens, please be
19 patient and know that we are working to ensure that
20 everyone has an opportunity to participate today.

21 Consistent with the entry of
22 September 28, 2020, we ask that you keep your
23 testimony to 5 minutes in length and avoid repetitive
24 comments. To avoid unnecessary background noise, we
25 ask that you keep your microphone on mute unless you

are commenting. Again, if you have questions about this process as the hearing proceeds, please use the chat function. Are there any questions before we officially start with today's proceeding?

Okay. Hearing none, I will pass it off to my Co-Judge, Matt Sandor.

ALJ SANDOR: Thank you, Judge Addison. The Ohio Power Siting Board has scheduled for hearing at this time and place Case No. 19-1881-EL-BGN which is captioned in the Matter of the Application of Madison Fields Solar Project, LLC, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need to Construct a Solar-Powered Electric Generation Facility in Madison County, Ohio.

As mentioned earlier, my name is Matt Sandor and with me is Megan Addison. We are Administrative Law Judges in the Board's Legal Department, and we will be conducting today's hearing. Also presiding with us today is the Director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Mary Mertz, who is also a member of the Ohio Power Siting Board.

At this time, Director Mertz, do you have any comments you would like to add?

DIRECTOR MERTZ: Thank you. No, just

1 looking forward to hearing the comments and feedback
2 on the project. Thank you very much.

3 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you, Director Mertz.

4 In addition to Director Mertz,
5 Administrative Law Judge Addison, and myself, there
6 are other staff members from the Board assisting with
7 various aspects of the hearing including Micah
8 Schmidt, Mary Fischer, Matt Butler, Jill Coker, and
9 Brittany Waugaman who will be overseeing the event on
10 Webex and YouTube.

11 At this time we'll take the appearances
12 by counsel of the parties to this case. We will
13 begin with the Applicant.

14 MS. PIRIK: Thank you, your Honor. On
15 behalf of the Applicant Madison Fields Solar Project,
16 LLC, the law firm of Dickinson Wright, 150 East Gay
17 Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215, Christine Pirik and
18 Will Vorys.

19 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. We have one
20 potential Intervenor in this case, the Ohio Farm
21 Bureau Federation. Hearing none. And Board Staff.
22 Hearing none as well.

23 I'll note that while counsel for Ohio
24 Farm Bureau Federation and Board Staff may not be
25 participating in this proceeding, non-counsel

1 representatives of the Farm Bureau and Board Staff
2 may be attending.

3 The subject of today's hearing is an
4 application filed by Madison Fields Solar Project,
5 LLC, for the purpose of constructing and operating
6 the solar-powered electric generation facility.
7 Specifically, the proposed project would occupy up to
8 1,000 acres within a 1,932-acre project area in Pike
9 Township in Madison County. The project will
10 generate 180 megawatts. Madison Fields' application
11 was filed on July 17, 2020, and was supplemented on
12 July 23 and August 3, 2020.

13 I would also note that the Board's Staff
14 filed a Report of Investigation on November 18, 2020.
15 This report is a recommendation from the Board's
16 Staff and does not necessarily reflect what the
17 Board's final determination in this case will be.

18 The purpose of today's public hearing is
19 to receive testimony regarding Madison Fields'
20 application from entities and persons in the local
21 community who are affected by the proposed project
22 but who are not parties to the case. The public --
23 the public hearing is not a question and answer
24 session but is an opportunity to let the Board know
25 what you think about the proposed project.

Today's public hearing is only one aspect of the process in this case. An evidentiary hearing is scheduled to begin on Thursday, December 17, 2020, through Webex. The purpose of the evidentiary hearing is for the parties in this case, including the Applicant, the Intervenor Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, and Board Staff to provide testimony and other evidence regarding the project.

Tonight's hearing is being transcribed by a court reporter, Karen Armstrong from Armstrong & Okey. If you plan to testify, please speak clearly so that the court reporter can accurately reflect your comments on the record. Please make sure that you verbally respond to all questions asked in order that they can be properly transcribed.

After I finish with this introduction, I will begin by calling individuals on the registration list to testify about the proposed project. Each person who registered to testify will -- will be permitted to speak once about the project. We will ask you to take an oath or affirmation that what you are about to say is the truth. Your testimony will then be considered as part of the official record in this case, and it will be reviewed by the Board before a final decision is made on the application.

1 Additionally, counsel for the parties in
2 this case, as well as Director Mertz, Judge Addison,
3 and myself will be permitted to ask you questions
4 about your testimony.

5 Should you decide that you do not want to
6 testify when I call your name from -- from the
7 registration list, you can pass to the next witness.
8 Also once you finish testifying or if you are merely
9 here to observe, you may leave the hearing at any
10 time you wish.

11 If individuals wish to supplement their
12 testimony with an exhibit for the Board's
13 consideration, a copy of the document along with a
14 reference to Case No. 19-1881-EL-BGN must be provided
15 to the Board no later than December 9, 2020, by
16 electronic mail to contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov or by
17 mail to Ohio Power Siting Board, 180 East Broad
18 Street, Attention Docketing Division, Columbus, Ohio
19 43215.

20 For those of you not testifying but who
21 wish to file a public comment regarding the proposed
22 project can do so in writing on the Board's website
23 by -- by electronic mail at contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov
24 or by mail to Ohio Power Siting Board, 180 East Broad
25 Street, Attention Docketing Division, Columbus, Ohio

1 43215. Written comments should reference Case No.
2 19-1881-EL-BGN.

3 The Board appreciates your participation
4 in tonight's hearing, and we want everyone who is
5 registered to testify to have the opportunity to do
6 so.

7 At this time we are going to begin with
8 the testimony. Both Judge Addison and myself
9 apologize in advance if we mispronounce your names,
10 but we will try our best to get it right. And having
11 said that, I believe our first witness is Anthony
12 Sasson. Can the host please promote the witness to
13 panelist role.

14 Mr. Sasson, can you please turn your
15 video on.

16 MR. SASSON: It should be on.

17 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Sir, will you
18 please raise your right hand.

19 (Witness sworn.)

20 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Please state and
21 spell your name for the record.

22 MR. SASSON: My name is Anthony Sasson,
23 S-A-S-S-O-N.

24 ALJ SANDOR: Please provide your address
25 including the township.

1 MR. SASSON: My address is 8351 Patterson
2 Road, Hilliard, Ohio. The township is Brown in
3 Franklin County.

4 ALJ SANDOR: Do you work or reside within
5 the project area?

6 MR. SASSON: I don't live or work within
7 the project area. I live about a mile outside of
8 Madison County.

9 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Thank you. Also,
10 Mr. Sasson, I want to assure you that we received
11 copies of your abbreviated testimony and full length
12 testimony just prior to the proceeding and copies of
13 those will be filed in the case docket along with the
14 transcript from tonight's proceeding.

15 MR. SASSON: Thank you.

16 ALJ SANDOR: Go ahead with your
17 testimony.

18 MR. SASSON: Good evening. My name is
19 Anthony Sasson. I'm providing this testimony on
20 behalf of the Darby Creek Association in the
21 following areas concerning the proposed Madison
22 Fields Solar Project. These are: Stormwater
23 management and groundwater recharge; encouraging
24 native plant species establishment and management;
25 and invasive species management.

I'm providing an abbreviated version of these comments, and a longer version, as has been stated, has been e-mailed to the Board.

Thank you for your attention. The Darby Creek Association is willing to provide further comments at a later time. The Darby Creek Association was founded in 1972 as a nonprofit organization to protect the ecological integrity of the Big and Little Darby Creeks and tributaries and outstanding natural features of the watershed.

We have the following preliminary recommendations we believe would make this a more environmentally sound and appropriate project for the area in which it is located, the Big Darby Creek watershed, and specifically within the Little Darby Creek watershed and the Darby Plains. Both the Big Darby Creek and Little Darby Creek are National and State Scenic Rivers, and designated as Exceptional Warmwater Habitat and Outstanding State Waters by the State of Ohio.

These streams support 37 rare and sensitive species of fish and mussels that are state and federally listed, including federally-listed species downstream of this project in Little Darby Creek. And it's recognized locally and statewide as

1 an Ohio natural resource treasure. Efforts to
2 protect the ecological integrity of the streams in
3 this watershed are among the most extensive in Ohio.

4 The Big Darby Creek watershed, including
5 Little Darby Creek, where this project is located,
6 includes some of the highest aquatic life scores ever
7 recorded by Ohio EPA in addition to harboring the
8 fish and mussels mentioned above. These species
9 include five federally listed mussel species, two of
10 which are found in Little Darby Creek near the
11 proposed site.

12 Concerning stormwater management and
13 groundwater recharge: In the DCA's written comments
14 we provide recommendations on enhancement of the
15 stormwater management that will benefit the natural
16 environment at and near the proposed project. DCA
17 requests that the site's stormwater permit
18 application establish a groundwater recharge
19 restoration goal for the entire site, significantly
20 exceeding minimum requirements in the stormwater
21 permit, and not just meeting the permit minimum, but
22 reaching a goal, to the maximum extent possible,
23 equivalent to that of the woods/forest, brush, or
24 meadow categories in the storm table. For any
25 streams on the site, we strongly encourage the

1 applicant to significantly exceed the minimum
2 riparian setback requirements found in the stormwater
3 permit, establish native vegetation in this riparian
4 setback area, and encourage groundwater recharge to
5 help protect these streams.

6 Concerning encouraging native plant
7 species establishment and management: While DCA
8 generally agrees with the recent OPSB Staff Report
9 for this proposed project, we find that many of the
10 plant species described in reports and guidance (such
11 as this Staff's Report referenced Ohio Pollinator
12 Habit Initiative) are not plants native to the Darby
13 Plains, and some are not native to Ohio or the U.S.
14 DCA strongly encourages that all areas at the
15 proposed site should be planted species native to
16 Darby Plains, and avoid plant species not native to
17 the area.

18 The DCA has a list of Darby Plains
19 prairie plant species, including grasses, forbs,
20 trees, and shrubs, which we can provide to the
21 applicant and others. These were determined from a
22 botanical survey referenced such as from Charles King
23 (1981). We note that the Ohio Department of Natural
24 Resources Scenic Rivers Program staff and the Madison
25 Soil and Water Conservation District have supported

1 planting of native species, species native to the
2 Darby Plains, such as prairie forbs and grasses, and
3 are more adapted to the soil and climate of the area,
4 helping to preserve the natural heritage.

5 Concerning the invasive species
6 management: We expect invasive species control to be
7 problematic. For example, honeysuckle, autumn olive,
8 and callery pear grow readily in Madison County, and
9 are found nearby along Little Darby Creek and
10 threaten nearby nature preserves. DCA expects these
11 will become problems at this site. We ask that the
12 facility diligently manage invasive species and
13 maintain the native vegetation, especially when
14 invasive species are common and can dominate the
15 vegetation in the general area.

16 We believe these recommendations would
17 make this a better project if it is approved and
18 proceeds. Attention to these recommendations would
19 recognize the unusual but outstanding nature of the
20 site and go beyond basic compliance -- compliance
21 with OPSB and other permit requirements. These
22 should help to improve the protection of the natural
23 heritage of the site, vegetation, and the National
24 Scenic River, Little Darby Creek.

25 Thank you for your attention. Please see

1 DCA's written testimony and summary. Thank you.

2 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Are there any
3 questions for this witness from counsel, Director
4 Mertz, or the Bench?

5 MS. PIRIK: No questions, your Honor.

6 ALJ SANDOR: All right. Hearing none,
7 you are excused. Thank you.

8 So our second -- second registered
9 witness, Tyler Duvelius, informed us just prior to
10 tonight that unfortunately he won't be able to make
11 it to testify. However, he did submit written
12 comments which will be filed in the public comments
13 section on the case docket.

14 So moving onto the third witness, Steve
15 Taylor, can the host please promote Mr. Taylor to a
16 panelist role.

17 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor,
18 you've been promoted. You can unmute your microphone
19 and turn on your video.

20 ALJ SANDOR: Good evening, Mr. Taylor.
21 Can you hear me?

22 MR. TAYLOR: Good evening. I can hear
23 you fine.

24 ALJ SANDOR: Excellent. Can you please
25 raise your right hand.

1 (Witness sworn.)

2 ALJ SANDOR: Please state and spell your
3 name for the record.

4 MR. TAYLOR: Steve Taylor, S-T-E-V-E
5 T-A-Y-L-O-R.

6 ALJ SANDOR: Please state your address
7 including the township.

8 MR. TAYLOR: 10307 Rosedale-Milford
9 Center Road, Irwin, Ohio, is the address, but the
10 township is Pike Township.

11 ALJ SANDOR: Do you work or reside within
12 the project area?

13 MR. TAYLOR: About 500 yards from the
14 project area is where we reside.

15 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. And also I want to
16 assure you, just as I had mentioned to Mr. Sasson,
17 that we received your -- the three photos that you
18 had provided and those will be filed in the case
19 docket with -- with any other exhibits received in
20 associated -- in association with tonight's
21 proceeding along with the transcript from tonight's
22 proceeding.

23 Please go ahead with your testimony.

24 MR. TAYLOR: Okay. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to speak to you today.

I'm a lifelong resident of Rosedale, Ohio. My home is located near the southeast side of the project area between the project area and Baron Creek in a small subdivision of homes. There are 11 homes in the subdivision. It's been there about 20 years. All of the lots in the subdivision are 5 acres or more.

My primary concern with the Madison Fields project is the potential for year round flooding in the area. The other homes in my subdivision and other homes in the -- in the drainage path of the project may also be subject to flooding. One of the primary drainage paths from the project site is Baron Creek. Baron Creek originally in the project area crosses under Rosedale-Milford Center Road and travels behind the homes of my subdivision. This creek does not flood very often. However, the drainage tiling to get the stormwater from the project area to the creek is inadequate, and we have occasional flooding issues.

Exhibit 1 which I submitted, which is the very first photo, is actually a photo taken on April 3 of 2018 by my wife through our kitchen window of our backyard, the 4 acres behind our home. That picture depicts basically a river running through our

1 backyard. It's about 20 feet wide running towards
2 Baron Creek. That usually occurs after a heavy rain.
3 It's not regular, but it's not unusual either. This
4 type of flooding usually occurs once a year. Our
5 neighbors, of course, have similar problems.

6 The flooding always occurs when there are
7 new crops actively growing on the project site. The
8 project will eliminate a thousand acres of corn or
9 soybean growth and that's going to occur for the next
10 30 years. A little bit of research, an Iowa State
11 University study determined that 200 bushel per acre
12 corn production, which is what we have around here,
13 uses 20 inches of rainfall during the growing season
14 through photosynthesis and evaporation of the plant.

15 So according to the USGS, 1 inch of
16 rainfall on 1 acre is 27,154 gallons of water. So
17 for the 20 inches of rainfall during the growing
18 season on that thousand acres, it's
19 583 million gallons of water that we're talking
20 about. This has to be dealt with in one way or
21 another. This is going to be additional water on top
22 of what we already deal with now.

23 The project will turn this land, the
24 project land, into meadow and many impervious areas
25 including hundreds of thousands of solar panels,

1 8 miles of gravel road, a construction area, and
 2 maintenance buildings. Section T of the application
 3 is a hydrologic and scour evaluation done by Langan
 4 Engineering. Part of the application packet, the
 5 summary for this section reads, in part, in the
 6 proposed conditions there will be an increased --
 7 increase in impervious areas associated with the
 8 access driveways, electrical equipment, and
 9 substation, and there will be a change in ground
 10 cover from agricultural to meadow.

11 Stormwater management practices will
 12 need -- need to be incorporated to provide
 13 stormwater -- water treatment to the new impervious
 14 areas, and the stormwater basin may be required to
 15 mitigate potential increases in the stormwater runoff
 16 as a result of development.

17 This is part of the packet. This firm
 18 also found multiple ponding locations documented in
 19 the report. There is sections of property where
 20 groundwater is found as little as 3 feet below the
 21 surface.

22 Section U of the application packet
 23 characterizes the history of Pike Township as having
 24 a few early set -- having a few early settlers due to
 25 its swampy nature before adequate tiling and ditches

1 were constructed. So we have water problems here
2 anyway.

3 My wife asked a question during one of
4 the public information meetings about this problem.
5 And we were contacted by Savion. On June 24, 2020,
6 we had a 25-minute conference call with the Savion
7 team. The team consisted of Sarah Moser, the project
8 leader, an engineer, an attorney, and one other
9 individual. We explained our concerns. They offered
10 no solutions. Sarah stated at the end of the call we
11 already have occasional flooding issues, so Savion
12 would not be liable for any future flooding issues
13 and this was a local government problem.

14 I contacted our township trustees, one of
15 whom is a landowner in the project, and they told to
16 us contact the county engineer. I called the county
17 engineer and left a message. I then e-mailed the
18 county engineer in early July twice, sent him
19 Exhibit 1, that photo, and got no response whatsoever
20 from him.

21 So potential flooding in the long run is
22 going to lead to failed septic systems, flooded
23 basements, and eroded foundations for all of us.
24 Now, the application has no details concerning
25 mitigation of stormwater runoff off of the site. It

1 talks about mitigation of stormwater runoff for the
2 site itself but not about what happens to the
3 neighbors. So I just feel the lack of concern from
4 Savion and our local officials is alarming and
5 believe that it's indicative of how we are going to
6 be treated in the future when there are problems that
7 come up as a result of this project.

8 Now, this isn't an unsolvable problem.
9 That's what's so -- so irritating about the whole
10 thing. Exhibit 2, which is a picture I submitted, is
11 actually a picture of a ditch in the Hardin County
12 Solar Farm site that is cut very deep, has very big
13 culverts, and is obviously much better than what we
14 have out here.

15 Exhibit 3 is a picture of our current
16 ditches in the area on Rosedale-Milford Center Road.
17 There are better pictures other than Exhibit 3 in the
18 application packet in section T. Deeply cut ditches
19 with large culverts, the dredging of Baron Creek, all
20 the way to Little Darby, the dredging of Spring-Ford,
21 and cleaning up some of the other drainage paths
22 would basically solve this issue.

23 So I'm at a loss as to why it's not being
24 addressed, so I thank you for your attention. And
25 that's all I have for you.

1 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Any questions
2 for this witness from counsel, Director Mertz, or the
3 Bench?

4 Okay. Hearing none, thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 Our next witness is Taylor Christian.
7 Can the host please promote Mr. Christian to a
8 panelist role.

9 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Christian, you have
10 been promoted. You can unmute your microphone and
11 turn on your video.

12 MR. CHRISTIAN: Good evening. How is
13 everyone?

14 ALJ SANDOR: Good evening. We're doing
15 well. How about yourself?

16 MR. CHRISTIAN: I'm doing well myself.

17 ALJ SANDOR: Please raise your right
18 hand.

19 (Witness sworn.)

20 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Please state and
21 spell your name for the record.

22 MR. CHRISTIAN: My name is Taylor
23 Christian, T-A-Y-L-O-R, last name C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N.

24 ALJ SANDOR: Please state your address
25 including the township.

1 MR. CHRISTIAN: My address is 9499 West
2 Calla Road, Salem, Ohio. That is in Green Township
3 in Mahoning County.

4 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. So do you work or
5 reside within the project area?

6 MR. CHRISTIAN: I do not.

7 ALJ SANDOR: All right. Please proceed
8 with your testimony.

9 MR. CHRISTIAN: Good evening, members of
10 the Ohio Power Siting Board. As I mentioned before,
11 my name is Taylor Christian. I am the Field
12 Operations Director for the Ohio Land & Liberty
13 Coalition. The Land & Liberty Coalition is a product
14 of the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum, OHCEF. OHCEF
15 focuses primarily on state-level policies while the
16 Land & Liberty Coalition engages on local energy
17 issues across the state of Ohio.

18 As an Ohioan myself, I encourage you to
19 approve the Madison Fields Solar Project. This
20 project has a number of benefits that include
21 increased resilience for Ohio farmers, more energy
22 independence for our state, and additional economic
23 development in our state. Farmers in Ohio and across
24 the country must navigate through shifting commodity
25 prices and varying crop yields. Renewable energy

1 projects like Madison Fields Solar Project come with
2 leaseholder payments for the landowners, many of whom
3 are farmers. The roughly \$24 million paid to
4 leaseholders will provide a long-term fixed income
5 that can provide a buffer against the challenges the
6 farmers face day in and day out.

7 This fixed income can help secure loans
8 as well. Potential lenders want to ensure that the
9 loan is going to be repaid, and seeing this long-term
10 steady cash flow can provide some reassurance to the
11 lenders allowing farmers to take out loans in order
12 to improve their operations. In some cases
13 leaseholder payments can help farmers retain control
14 of their farm. The money from harvesting sunlight on
15 a portion of the property allows the farm to make a
16 steady profit while the rest of the land can be used
17 to grow crops. Yes, some of the land will be
18 temporarily taken out of the agricultural production.

19 The alternative is selling this land and
20 turning it into whether it's housing developments or
21 other nonagricultural uses that personally removes
22 this land from agricultural production. So the
23 Madison Fields Solar Project overall will help to
24 retain farmland in the long term.

25 Farmers obviously aren't the only

beneficiaries of solar projects or this project. Our state will benefit as a whole by approving this project and others like it. Ohio can diversify its energy portfolio. It's even possible to flip Ohio's status from net energy importer to net energy exporter. The more energy we produce here at home the better we can navigate future energy challenges that may occur. With more energy produced here at home from a plethora of sources, Ohio can be better insulated from fluctuations in both price and availability.

Finally, Madison Fields and other projects like it increase economic development at home. They do this in a number of ways. In the case of Madison Fields, the construction phase will create almost 500 jobs. Afterwards, there will be about 20 long-term jobs created in the community. If that's not enough, Madison Fields stands to provide over \$26.5 million for the Fairbanks Local School District without requiring any additional school spending. The project will provide more than \$12.7 million to the Madison County general fund, again without requiring any additional infrastructure spending. And it will also provide over \$3 million to Pike Township, again without requiring additional spending

1 from local governments.

2 It's also important to note how vital
3 renewable energy development is to attracting
4 businesses. Companies like Google, Facebook, Amazon,
5 and many others want renewable energy when looking to
6 open new facilities and, you know, therefore create
7 jobs. They are going to be attracted to areas that
8 can provide it to them. The more that we generate
9 here the better our chances of attracting this kind
10 of business development. If Ohio doesn't take the
11 lead in renewable energy development, it could be
12 losing out on a lot of opportunity for Ohio workers.

13 Now, in summary, I encourage you to
14 approve the Madison Fields Solar Project. Among the
15 benefits for doing so are increased resilience for
16 Ohio farmers, increased energy income for our state,
17 and additional economic development here at home.

18 Thank you for your time and I am happy to
19 entertain any questions you may have regarding my
20 testimony.

21 ALJ SANDOR: Any questions for this
22 witness from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

23 Hearing none, you are excused. Thank you
24 for your testimony.

25 MR. CHRISTIAN: Thank you very much. I

1 appreciate it.

2 ALJ SANDOR: Our next witness is Cathy
3 Cowan Becker. May the -- can the host promote
4 Ms. Cowan Becker to a panelist role.

5 MR. SCHMIDT: Ms. Cowan Becker, you have
6 been promoted. Please unmute your microphone and
7 enable your video.

8 MS. COWAN BECKER: Okay.

9 ALJ SANDOR: Good evening.

10 MS. COWAN BECKER: Hi there.

11 ALJ SANDOR: Please raise your right
12 hand.

13 (Witness sworn.)

14 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Please state and
15 spell your name for the record.

16 MS. COWAN BECKER: Cathy, C-A-T-H-Y,
17 Cowan, C-O-W-A-N, Becker, B-E-C-K-E-R.

18 ALJ SANDOR: Please state your address
19 including the township.

20 MS. COWAN BECKER: 4275 White Spruce
21 Lane, Grove City, Ohio 43123, I believe it's Jackson
22 Township.

23 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Do you work or reside
24 within the project area?

25 MS. COWAN BECKER: I do not.

1 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed --
2 proceed with your testimony.

3 MS. COWAN BECKER: All right. Thank you
4 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is
5 Cathy Cowan Becker. I'm testifying on behalf of
6 Simply Living, a community organization that promotes
7 sustainability, environmental awareness, and our
8 local economy.

9 Simply Living works in conjunction with
10 the Ohio Sustainable Business Council, the statewide
11 coalition of businesses and business networks
12 committed to public policies of the local, state, and
13 federal levels to support a vibrant, just, and
14 sustainable economy.

15 So both Simply Living and the Ohio
16 Sustainable Business Council strongly support the
17 Madison Fields Solar Project. This project would
18 provide 180 megawatts of solar energy in Madison
19 County which is enough electricity to power 34,000
20 homes.

21 As you may know, the Intergovernmental
22 Panel on Climate Change has said that we must cut
23 carbon emissions 45 percent by 2030 and to 0 by 2050
24 if we want -- if we want a liveable planet. Ohio is
25 the 6th highest carbon emitting state, so our share

1 of these emissions is significant, and we must move
2 Ohio to a clean energy economy, and projects like
3 Madison Fields will help us get there.

4 So if approved, the project would offset
5 31,500 tons of carbon emissions each year equal to
6 planting over 741,000 trees and -- or removing 5,581
7 cars from the road each year. Over the 30-year
8 lifespan of the project, Madison Fields would avert
9 945,000 tons of carbon emissions equal to planting
10 22 million trees or taking 167,000 cars off the road.

11 So poll after poll has found widespread
12 support for renewable energy in Ohio. A March 2018
13 poll found that 7 in 10 Ohio voters favored a goal of
14 generating 100 percent of the state's electricity
15 using clean and renewable sources like solar and wind
16 by 2030. A February 2019 poll found two-thirds of
17 Ohio conservatives believe that the state should
18 generate at least half its energy from renewable
19 sources. And an October 2019 poll found that nearly
20 two-thirds of Ohio voters said developing renewable
21 energy is the most important strategy to address
22 Ohio's energy need.

23 Part of the charge of Simply Living and
24 the Ohio Sustainable Business Council is to promote
25 the local economy and there's nothing more important

1 to that than locally generated power. And the
2 Madison Fields Solar Project is a win-win for the
3 local community.

4 Construction of the solar farm would
5 inject over 30 million -- \$30 million into the
6 Madison County economy directly and over 8 million
7 indirectly. In Ohio as a whole, those figures are
8 41 million in direct expenditures and 55 million in
9 indirect expenditures for a total of another
10 97 million in the state economy.

11 The project would also create jobs, 477
12 direct construction jobs and 113 indirect jobs in
13 Madison County and 627 direct and 808 indirect --
14 indirect jobs in Ohio.

15 So a recent study from Ohio University
16 points to the importance of utility scale solar in
17 Ohio. If our state was to aggressively move into a
18 clean energy economy, it could create over 54,000
19 construction jobs, generate 9.6 million -- billion in
20 economic impacts, and generate 2.7 billion in tax
21 revenue. These are much needed dollars that local
22 communities can use for schools, fire departments,
23 infrastructure, and other necessities.

24 One common question about utility scale
25 solar projects is the environmental impact, and an

entire body of lifecycle analysis research finds that solar and wind energy have significantly lower environmental footprint than fossil fuel projects like mining, drilling, or fracking. Further, solar panels are compatible with other forms of conservation such as native plants, pollinators, and even a sheep farm.

My understanding is Madison Fields is working with the county solar and water -- soil and water agency to plant native grasses on site, and when the project is at the end of its lifespan, the solar panels can be reused, recycled, or disposed, and the land can be restored to the original condition.

So for all these reasons, Simply Living and the Ohio Sustainable Business Council support the Madison Fields Solar Project, and we urge you to approve it.

Thank you. I will be happy to take any questions.

ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Any questions from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

All right. Hearing none, thank you for your testimony tonight.

Our next witness is Errol Gattis. Can

1 the host please promote Mr. Gattis to a panelist
2 role.

3 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Gattis, you have been
4 promoted. Please unmute your microphone and turn on
5 your video.

6 ALJ SANDOR: So as of right now,
7 Mr. Gattis, we can't see you. I'm sorry. Can you
8 say that again?

9 MR. GATTIS: Come on.

10 ALJ SANDOR: It's not working. We can
11 give a few more seconds if you want to try, but if
12 not, we'll proceed, but I will give you a few seconds
13 first.

14 MR. GATTIS: Okay.

15 ALJ SANDOR: All right. Good. Okay. So
16 I can see you now. All right. Please raise your
17 right hand.

18 (Witness sworn.)

19 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Please state and
20 spell your name for the record.

21 MR. GATTIS: My name is Errol Gattis,
22 E-R-R-O-L G-A-T-T-I-S.

23 ALJ SANDOR: Please state your address
24 including the township.

25 MR. GATTIS: 2885 State Route 38, London,

1 Ohio 43140 in Deer Creek Township.

2 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Mr. Gattis, actually
3 let's try, if you don't mind, turning your video off
4 because there seems to be a delay in the testimony
5 and that way we can hear you better.

6 okay. Can you let us know if you reside
7 within the project area or work within the project
8 area?

9 MR. GATTIS: I live in Madison County.

10 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. And that sounds
11 better. All right. Please proceed with your
12 testimony.

13 MR. GATTIS: Thank you. My name is Errol
14 Gattis. I live in Madison County, and I am also a
15 member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical
16 Workers, IBEW Local 683. In addition to my career as
17 an electrician, I also consider myself a farmer
18 because I grew up on a family farm outside this area.

19 I wanted to speak tonight in support of
20 the Madison Fields project on behalf of myself and my
21 family. It is no secret farming is difficult both
22 physically and economically. This project will
23 directly benefit the farming family and residents of
24 our community. This project will directly benefit
25 families in this area through the construction jobs.

1 It is my hope that these are good union construction
2 jobs. The local union is ready to work with Madison
3 Fields and provide the workers they need to complete
4 this project, and I am excited for the opportunity to
5 be one of those workers.

6 Thank you for your time this evening.

7 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. I think we heard
8 most of that so thank you very much. Any questions
9 for Mr. Gattis from counsel, Director Mertz, or the
10 Bench?

11 Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.
12 You are excused.

13 All right. Our next witness is Aaron
14 Boerger. Can the host please promote Mr. Boerger to
15 the panelist role.

16 MS. COKER: Your Honor, I have telephone
17 witness Aaron on the phone, Aaron Boerger.

18 ALJ SANDOR: Aaron Boerger, thank you.

19 Aaron, can you please state your --
20 sorry. Can you please raise your right hand. I
21 think you might be muted, sir. If you can unmute
22 yourself. Can you hear me now?

23 MS. COKER: Yep.

24 ALJ SANDOR: Can you please raise your
25 right hand. Is it raised?

1 MS. COKER: Aaron, can you hear? One
2 minute. Aaron? One minute.

3 ALJ SANDOR: Okay.

4 MS. COKER: If we could go to the next
5 witness and I will try to get him on the phone again.
6 Thank you.

7 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Our next registered
8 witness is Tim Strawn. If the pan -- if the host
9 could please promote Mr. Strawn to a panelist
10 position.

11 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Strawn, you've been
12 promoted. Please unmute your microphone and enable
13 your video.

14 ALJ SANDOR: Good evening.

15 MR. STRAWN: Good evening.

16 ALJ SANDOR: Please raise your right
17 hand. Do you swear that the testimony you're about
18 to provide is the truth?

19 Oops. One moment. Can you still hear
20 me? There was a delay there.

21 MR. STRAWN: Yeah, I can. Okay. Can
22 you hear me now?

23 ALJ SANDOR: Yes. That's much better
24 with the video off.

25 MR. STRAWN: Okay.

1 ALJ SANDOR: So let me try that again
2 just in case you didn't hear me. Please raise your
3 right hand.

4 (Witness sworn.)

5 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Please state and
6 spell your name for the record.

7 MR. STRAWN: Tim, T-I-M, Strawn,
8 S-T-R-A-W-N.

9 ALJ SANDOR: Please state your address
10 including the township.

11 MR. STRAWN: It's 6910 Rosedale-Milford
12 Center Road and that's Monroe Township.

13 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. And do you work
14 or reside within the project area?

15 MR. STRAWN: Yes, I do.

16 ALJ SANDOR: Please proceed with your
17 testimony.

18 MR. STRAWN: Good evening. As I stated,
19 my name is Tim Strawn. I am a member of the
20 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, IBEW
21 Local 683. I live in Madison County again at 6910
22 Rosedale-Milford Center Road. It's approximately
23 3 miles from the project site where Madison Fields
24 will be constructed.

25 I speak tonight in support of

1 construction jobs this project will bring to our
2 community. The estimated hundreds of jobs that will
3 be created during a construction phase of this
4 project is commun -- is important for our community.
5 It is my hope that these jobs will be good union
6 jobs. Utility scale solar projects like Madison
7 Fields bring with them the opportunity for lifelong
8 careers in the construction field.

9 I can speak from my experience that my
10 career as a journeyman electrician with Local 683 has
11 provided for my family and allowed me to live
12 comfortably in this community. Again, I speak
13 tonight in full support of this project, and I'm
14 excited about the jobs it could bring to our
15 community. Thank you for your time.

16 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Any questions
17 for this witness from counsel, Director Mertz, or the
18 Bench?

19 All right. Hearing none, you are --
20 thank you for your testimony. You are excused.

21 Now Judge Addison.

22 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. I
23 believe our next witness is Patrick Hook. Can the
24 host please promote the witness to a panelist role.

25 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Hook, you've been

1 promoted. Please unmute your microphone and enable
2 your video.

3 MR. HOOK: Hello.

4 ALJ ADDISON: Good evening, Mr. Hook.
5 How are you?

6 MR. HOOK: Good. How are you doing?

7 ALJ ADDISON: Doing well. Will you
8 please raise your right hand.

9 (Witness sworn.)

10 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. Please state
11 and spell your name for the record.

12 MR. HOOK: Patrick Hook, H-O-O-K, 1502
13 Glenn Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. That's Franklin County
14 and Franklin Township.

15 ALJ ADDISON: I'm sorry, Mr. Hook. Would
16 you mind restating that? I believe there was some
17 delay in your video.

18 MR. HOOK: Patrick Hook, H-O-O-K, address
19 1502 Glenn Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. That's in
20 Franklin County, Franklin Township.

21 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. Do
22 you work or reside in the project area?

23 MR. HOOK: No.

24 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. You may proceed
25 with your statement.

MR. HOOK: Thank you. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak this evening. I hope everyone and their family is doing well in these strange and scary times.

As I said, my name is Patrick Hook, and I am a member and business representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 683. Local 638 represents electrical workers that live and work in the central Ohio area including the proposed Madison Fields solar site. IBEW 683 strongly supports the approval of this project.

Approval of this project will be beneficial to the residents of Ohio in many ways, jobs for local residents, including increased training opportunities for local electrical workers, increase in tax revenue to local schools and municipalities, a decrease in pollution created from other sources of power generation, the availability of clean energy for businesses in Ohio, and the availability of clean energy for the residents of Ohio, and also adding diversity to the energy production in Ohio.

Thank you.

ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much, Mr. Hook.

1 Are there any questions for this witness
2 from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

3 Hearing none, you are excused. Thank you
4 very much for your time tonight.

5 I believe our next witness is Ed Moore.
6 Would the host please promote the witness to a
7 panelist role.

8 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Moore, you've been
9 promoted. Please unmute your microphone and enable
10 your video.

11 MR. MOORE: It's on now.

12 ALJ ADDISON: Hello, Mr. Moore. Would
13 you please raise your right hand.

14 (Witness sworn.)

15 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. Can you please
16 state and spell your name for the record.

17 MR. MOORE: Yeah. My name is Ed Moore,
18 E-D M-O-O-R-E.

19 ALJ ADDISON: And your address and
20 township, Mr. Moore.

21 MR. MOORE: 1655 Rome Corners Road,
22 Galena, Ohio. That is Berkshire Township in Delaware
23 County.

24 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. And
25 do you reside or work in the project area?

1 MR. MOORE: No. I worked in Madison
2 County but not presently so.

3 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. You
4 may provide your testimony.

5 MR. MOORE: Okay. Good evening. Like I
6 said, my name is Ed Moore. I'm a longtime member
7 of -- and the business manager of the International
8 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 683, and over
9 my years of employment, I have worked throughout
10 central Ohio including Madison County and have
11 watched the transition of coal generation to
12 generation with lower or no carbon emissions such as
13 solar.

14 The Madison County rural area with its
15 vast farmland is particularly suited to be a great
16 area for this project. Speak in complete support of
17 the jobs that the Madison Fields project will
18 provide. The hundreds of jobs, hundreds of direct
19 jobs, will have a lasting impact on the area. I know
20 that the IBEW stands ready to provide the workers
21 necessary to complete this project in a safe, timely
22 manner.

23 It is also our intention that given the
24 opportunities, these jobs will become lifelong
25 careers in the electrical industry, good paying

1 steady jobs with benefits.

2 Thank you for your time this evening. I
3 look forward to working with you, Madison Fields
4 project, the Ohio Power Siting Board, providing any
5 information I can to ensure this project moves
6 forward. Thank you.

7 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
8 Mr. Moore. Are there any questions for this witness
9 from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

10 Hearing none, you are excused. Thank you
11 very much.

12 And before we proceed to our next witness
13 in the predesignated order, I believe I may have
14 heard Mr. Boerger. Do we have him online at this
15 point?

16 MS. COKER: Yes, we do. Aaron.

17 MR. BOERGER: Yes, I'm online.

18 ALJ ADDISON: Hello, Mr. Boerger.

19 MR. BOERGER: Yes, I have my right hand
20 up.

21 ALJ ADDISON: Excellent.

22 (Witness sworn.)

23 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. Please state
24 and spell your name for the record.

25 MR. BOERGER: Aaron Boerger, A-A-R-O-N,

1 B-O-E-R-G-E-R.

2 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. And your
3 address and township, Mr. Boerger.

4 MR. BOERGER: Address 3370 Rosedale Road,
5 Irwin, I-R-W-I-N, Ohio 43029, Pike Township.

6 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. And
7 do you reside or work in the project area?

8 MR. BOERGER: I do both. I live in the
9 project, and I work there every day.

10 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
11 Mr. Boerger. You may proceed with your statement.

12 MR. BOERGER: Yes. I want to talk a
13 little bit about the support of the project and the
14 conservation of the actual farm here. We get a
15 little feedback or negativity on the, you know,
16 taking good farm ground out of production. And we
17 look at it more as a conservation program for the --
18 for our kids, for the next generation, so in 30 years
19 when they get a chance to farm, they will have --
20 this soil will be in better condition than it was
21 when we got it.

22 The only other way we can go about that
23 is the -- you know, the government, the FSA office,
24 with the CRP program which, you know, it's a
25 government-funded program that the taxpayers pay the

1 farmers not to farm. And this program this soil gets
2 to be preserved and serve and generates tax dollars.
3 So that's kind of the way we go about it so and look
4 at it.

5 And then a couple other topics I wanted
6 to highlight on is the native grasses and the
7 drainage. This whole project is systematically
8 tiled, and it does have very good drainage from
9 across the county, and with the native grasses
10 growing year round that will help that drainage
11 situation because it will be there year round instead
12 of only having crops, you know, for our crop season
13 that we typically do with corn and soybeans and wheat
14 today.

15 And the other couple topics I guess I
16 have would be, you know, the tax dollars that are
17 going to come back to this local community and what
18 it will be able to do with it at the school district.
19 And there is just a lot of great things in the future
20 for this community having this project Madison Fields
21 pulled off, so I give my support for it. And, you
22 know, we will be able to use those tax dollars to
23 make drainage better for some of the residents around
24 that are maybe not pleased with the way it is and
25 that kind of stuff. So there is a lot of things we

1 could do with it.

2 That's all I have to say, ma'am.

3 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
4 Mr. Boerger.

5 Are there any questions for this witness
6 from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

7 Hearing none, you are excused,
8 Mr. Boerger. Thank you very much.

9 I believe our next witness is Shannon
10 Engle. Will the host please promote the witness to a
11 panelist role.

12 MR. BUTLER: Actually, your Honor, this
13 is Matt Butler. I have Mr. Engle on the phone.

14 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
15 Mr. Butler.

16 Mr. Engle, can you hear me?

17 MR. ENGLE: Yes, ma'am.

18 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. Will you please
19 raise your right hand.

20 (Witness sworn.)

21 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. Will
22 you please state and spell your name for the record.

23 MR. ENGLE: It's Shannon Engle,
24 S-H-A-N-N-O-N E-N-G-L-E.

25 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. And your

1 address including the township.

2 MR. ENGLE: 1505 Finley Guy Road, Plain
3 City, Canaan Township.

4 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. And
5 do you reside or work within the project area?

6 MR. ENGLE: Outside.

7 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. You
8 may proceed with your testimony.

9 MR. ENGLE: Good evening. My name is
10 Shannon Engle. I would like to thank you for the
11 opportunity to participate in tonight's Power Siting
12 Board meeting. I am a member of the International
13 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, IBEW 683.

14 I am speaking tonight in support of the
15 Madison Fields project. The potential job
16 opportunities that this project will create will be
17 lifelong careers for many IBEW men and women in rural
18 Ohio such as myself, with careers and jobs like the
19 Madison Fields project, and this opportunity will not
20 be any different. The hundreds of potential job
21 opportunities created by Madison Fields will be part
22 of a career or, better yet, a beginning of a career
23 in the electrical industry, a path to the American
24 dream.

25 If this project proceeds, I hope to be

1 one of the electricians to build the state of the art
2 solar array. Thank you for your time.

3 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
4 Mr. Engle.

5 Are there any questions for this witness
6 from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

7 Hearing none, you are excused, Mr. Engle.
8 Thank you very much for your time.

9 MR. ENGLE: Thank you.

10 ALJ ADDISON: I believe our next witness
11 is Travis Askew. Can the host please promote the
12 witness to a panelist role.

13 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Askew, you have been
14 promoted. Please unmute your microphone and enable
15 your video.

16 MR. ASKEW: Hello. My name is Travis.

17 ALJ ADDISON: Hello, Mr. Askew. How are
18 you tonight?

19 MR. ASKEW: Good. How are you?

20 ALJ ADDISON: Doing well. Will you
21 please raise your right hand.

22 (Witness sworn.)

23 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much.
24 Please state and spell your name for the record.

25 MR. ASKEW: It's Travis Askew,

1 T-R-A-V-I-S A-S-K-E-W.

2 ALJ ADDISON: And your address including
3 your township.

4 MR. ASKEW: Is 10955 Rosedale-Milford
5 Center Road, Irwin, Ohio 43029, Pike Township.

6 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. And
7 do you reside or work within the project area?

8 MR. ASKEW: Reside.

9 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. You
10 may proceed with your testimony.

11 MR. ASKEW: Hello. My name is Travis
12 Askew, and I am just giving some of this testimony
13 this evening on behalf of the solar project with a
14 little reservation on some of my concerns.

15 The biggest thing for this is I have two
16 younger children. They will highly benefit from this
17 solar field as far as the school revenue that will
18 develop for them to be able to have a better
19 education there, to be able to provide more revenue
20 to the tax revenue of this project.

21 Given that this is a very large farm
22 community, it is a little bit tougher to make it --
23 to make revenue without having more homes in the
24 area. Given this, this will be able to help the tax
25 burden put on the farmers in this area, to help

1 alleviate some of it. Given the other revenues that
2 this will help provide, this township will be able to
3 help improve the roads and the county roads inside
4 this township to help from the -- sorry, additional
5 funds from this.

6 But I also look at it as a way to help
7 our community here with an easy and a sustainable
8 energy source. Some of the reservations I do have
9 are -- because I live directly across from this
10 project will be our -- the view of the site during
11 active construction and any other issues we would
12 have during a construction process and the cleanup
13 from this construction process.

14 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you, Mr. Askew.

15 Does that conclude your testimony?

16 MR. ASKEW: Yes.

17 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much.

18 Are there any questions for this witness
19 from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

20 Hearing none, you are excused, Mr. Askew.
21 Thank you very much.

22 Our next witness is Toni Young. Can the
23 host please promote the witness to a panelist role.

24 MS. COKER: Your Honor, I have telephone
25 witness Ms. Young on the phone.

1 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
2 Ms. Coker.

3 Hello, Ms. Young. Can you hear me?

4 MS. YOUNG: Yes, I can hear you. Can you
5 hear me?

6 ALJ ADDISON: I can. Thank you very
7 much. Will you please raise your right hand.

8 (Witness sworn.)

9 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. Will
10 you please state and spell your name for the record.

11 MS. YOUNG: Yes. My name is Toni Young,
12 T-O-N-I Y-O-U-N-G.

13 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
14 Ms. Young. And your address including your township.

15 MS. YOUNG: My address is 12000 State
16 Route 4, Mechanicsburg, Ohio, Goshen Township. I'm
17 in Champaign County.

18 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much. And
19 do you reside or work within the project area?

20 MS. YOUNG: I'm less than 1-1/2 miles
21 from the project area.

22 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
23 Ms. Young. You may proceed with your testimony.

24 MS. YOUNG: Thank you. The proposed
25 central -- the proposed solar project,

1 19-1881-EL-BGN, is very concerning in many aspects.
 2 I've never dealt with the OPSB or any invasive
 3 projects that dealt with planting glass and posts in
 4 an agricultural area. I have spent decades enjoying
 5 agricultural farming of which I can see from a
 6 distance. I know what field and I know what roads
 7 are being traveled as well as glare off vehicles at
 8 sunset.

9 The public has been restricted from OPSB
 10 public events, yet the OPSB project -- and project
 11 can have site meetings to see a harvested bean field
 12 allowing participants to travel from counties that
 13 are red into and through counties that weren't red
 14 without social distancing and masks as well as out of
 15 state vehicles in the spring of 2020 during a state
 16 of emergency. Rules for us, none for them.

17 This project should be placed on hold
 18 until the public isn't restricted and -- restricted
 19 from and excluded as the virtual outreach isn't
 20 working. Neither is blocking the public. From
 21 reading the project numerous applications, data
 22 requests, Staff investigation findings, the elephant
 23 in the room is missing. It's the environment within
 24 and around the project.

25 1997 Department of Interior Fish and

1 Wildlife Services made a study for a new national
2 wildlife refuge. 1991 the same area around the
3 project was trying to plan a landfill which seems
4 similar to what this project proposes. With the 1997
5 study county and townships passed resolutions against
6 the wildlife refuge proposal and was described as a
7 land grant which seems the same as to consider a
8 commercial utility project in the middle of an
9 agricultural property.

10 Further, it should be considered hazmat
11 as the project application outlines leaving cables in
12 the ground below 36 inches. Solar energy will not
13 save the world when it uses sand, and sand can't
14 re -- reproduce itself taking away from the
15 microorganisms that call it home. Glass takes a
16 million years to decompose or longer in the landfill.

17 The project outlines these PV panels
18 won't fly -- won't break or fly away which is
19 questionable since over three electric poles in
20 Madison County over two weeks ago were laid down, and
21 they had no resistance surface. Unless the PV panels
22 lay flat on the ground they won't survive. Neither
23 did a barn on Rosedale Road just last January 2020 in
24 the project area.

25 I love birds, wildlife, agricultural

1 fields, and all the tributaries to the Little and Big
2 Darby Creeks. The Department of Interior Fish and
3 Wildlife Services outline as to Spring-Ford Creek
4 which is located across the road from 3370 Rosedale
5 Road, just look for the side and the -- on the south
6 side, in their final report that the extremely high
7 quality of this tributary and the stream it
8 confluences with, Little Darby Creek, deserves the
9 maximum protection possible under the law,
10 unpublished Ohio EPA report 1992-93. There needs to
11 be an environmental study done as to the effect of
12 boring 81 holes over two aquifers as groundwater is
13 part of Bear Run and Spring-Ford Creek.

14 It also was brought to my attention this
15 week at least as an amendment for a well or wells for
16 the use of the project filed 11-24-20 and the Staff
17 Investigation Report filed 11-18-20, page 30,
18 verbatim says the project didn't need much water as
19 did the project application.

20 Cloak and dagger with the leases not
21 being filed with the Recorder's office as the -- as
22 the second data request doesn't have all the leases
23 filed with the recorder's office, I question why the
24 project needs a 2 acre building as there wasn't an
25 interior plan to this building.

1 The project needs to confirm the location
2 of the project prior to approval as the project is
3 saying 300 acres for the array. The application map
4 shows differently. These solar projects are too new
5 for Ohio and make the locals as well as the
6 environment into lab rats.

7 The bentonite clay safety data sheet
8 actually says it can have adverse effect to the
9 environment, and the environmental studies need to be
10 done. Natural or not it's more dangerous than silt
11 to the eco watershed. Placing flowers around the
12 solar panels will only promote the birds and insects
13 getting burned by the hot PV surfaces. Further,
14 birds can cause hotspots on PV panels with their
15 waste. Dewatering will be a must as of the 81 holes
16 bored 44 counted water at 6-foot or less.

17 This project holds for me no public
18 interest nor a necessity. I will post my additional
19 issues on the public post. I do not wish to be
20 contacted by the project or associates.

21 I could go on, but I am out of time.

22 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
23 Ms. Young.

24 MS. YOUNG: Thank you.

25 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. Are there any

1 questions for this witness from counsel, Director
2 Mertz, or the Bench?

3 Seeing none, you are excused, Ms. Young.
4 Thank you for taking the time to provide your
5 testimony this evening.

6 MS. YOUNG: Thank you.

7 ALJ ADDISON: Our next witness is John
8 Hill. Can the host promote the witness to a panelist
9 role.

10 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Hill, you have been
11 promoted. Please enable your microphone and video.

12 MR. HILL: Can you hear me?

13 ALJ ADDISON: I can, Mr. Hill. Have
14 you --

15 MR. HILL: Yeah. Okay.

16 ALJ ADDISON: There's your video. Thank
17 you. Mr. Hill, if you could raise your right hand.

18 (Witness sworn.)

19 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you. Please state
20 and spell your name for the record.

21 MS. HILL: Yeah. My name is John Hill,
22 J-O-H-N H-I-L-L.

23 ALJ ADDISON: And your address including
24 your township.

25 MR. HILL: My address is 49 West State

1 Street, Milford Center, Ohio 4306 -- 45 and I live in
2 Union Township.

3 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
4 Mr. Hill. And do you reside or work within the
5 project area?

6 MR. HILL: I do. I do.

7 ALJ ADDISON: For both of those? Is that
8 an affirmative?

9 MR. HILL: I live -- I work in the
10 area -- in the proposed area, and I live just outside
11 of the proposed area so.

12 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much for
13 that clarification. All right. You may proceed with
14 your testimony.

15 MR. HILL: Yeah. I just want to thank
16 you for giving me the opportunity to speak this
17 evening. Like I said, my name is John Hill, and I
18 live close to the proposed area. In addition to
19 being a stakeholder as a member of the community, I
20 am also a member of the IBEW, International
21 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Union 683. My son
22 attends Fairbanks Schools.

23 This project is very personal to me. The
24 tax revenue generated from the Madison Fields
25 project -- project is expected to provide the

1 necessary funding for my children's schools and those
2 in the surrounding townships, not to mention
3 necessary infrastructure projects in our community.

4 It is my opinion that the additional
5 revenue will create more jobs in addition to the
6 initial 450 direct jobs from the project. Upgrades
7 in our community, to our roads, lighting, bridges,
8 parks, and more will finally be able to gain the
9 priority status they need because of revenue from the
10 Madison Fields project. I am -- I am proud to
11 support the Madison Fields project, the jobs and the
12 revenue it will bring to our communities.

13 Thank you for your time.

14 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
15 Mr. Hill.

16 Are there any questions for this witness
17 from counsel, Director Mertz, or the Bench?

18 Hearing none, you are excused. Thank you
19 very much.

20 Thank you. That concludes those
21 individuals who have registered to provide testimony
22 this evening. The Board appreciates your
23 participation in this public hearing.

24 I also thank all of those who may have
25 witnessed the public hearing either -- either via

1 Webex or over the phone.

2 I would just like to give an opportunity
3 to Director Mertz if you have any concluding remarks.

4 DIRECTOR MERTZ: I don't. I just -- I
5 appreciate the opportunity to hear everyone's
6 comments. Appreciate your time. It's important we
7 hear everyone's thoughts on these projects so thank
8 you all very, very much.

9 ALJ ADDISON: Thank you very much,
10 Director Mertz.

11 And with that this concludes today's
12 public hearing. We are adjourned. Thank you all.

13 (Thereupon, at 7:15 p.m., the hearing was
14 adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is
a true and correct transcript of the proceedings
taken by me in this matter on Thursday, December 3,
2020, and carefully compared with my original
stenographic notes.

Karen Sue Gibson, Registered
Merit Reporter.

(KSG-7003)

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Summary: Transcript in the matter of the Madison Fields Solar Project, LLC hearing held on 12/03/20 electronically filed by Mr. Ken Spencer on behalf of Armstrong & Okey, Inc. and Gibson, Karen Sue Mrs.