

From: [Puco ContactOPSB](#)
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Subject: Public Comment for Case No. 20-1679-EL-BGN Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center
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Public Comment
Ohio Power Siting Board
Case No: 20-1679-EL-BGN
Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center

January 17, 2021

Members of the Ohio Power Siting Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this public comment regarding Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center, a solar project proposed for southwest Franklin County.

My name is Cathy Cowan Becker, and I am the longtime chair of Ready for 100 in Ohio, a campaign asking cities to commit to 100% renewable energy. My group was instrumental in putting Community Choice Aggregation for 100% renewable energy on the ballot in both Columbus and Grove City, and I personally managed the Grove City campaign. I also live just a few miles from the site where the Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center would be built.

I am also an incoming member of Westland Area Commission, as well as a member of the Grove City Sustainability Committee and Sustainable Columbus External Partners Advisory Group. I also work with several other environmental and civic organizations such as Climate Reality Project, Sunrise Movement, Simply Living, and the Ohio Sustainable Business Council.

Although I cannot speak on behalf of any of the city commissions that I am a member of, I can tell you that the environmental organizations I work with strongly support the Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center. This project would provide 250 MW of solar energy in Franklin County, enough electricity to power 45,000 homes with carbon-free electricity.

Now that Columbus and other cities have committed to sourcing their energy from construction of local renewable energy facilities, this project has a guaranteed customer for life. The Columbus aggregation initiative requires the city's utility supplier, AEP, to contract for 700 MW of locally sourced renewable energy, while the Grove City initiative seeks 15 MW of locally sourced renewable energy. Once this project is built, the customers are likely to be us.

As you may know, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) has said that we must [cut carbon emissions](#) 45% by 2030 and to zero by 2050 if we want to have a chance of a livable planet. Ohio is the sixth-highest carbon emitting state, so our share of these emissions is significant. We must move Ohio to a clean energy economy, and projects like the Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center will help us get there. Renewable energy, including solar, is a win-win-win for people, economy, and environment. If approved, the Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center will avert as much carbon emissions as taking 50,000 cars off the road – while creating 800 construction jobs and injecting \$4.4 million into our local economy.

Poll after poll has found widespread support for renewable energy in Ohio. A [March 2018 poll](#) found that 7 in 10 Ohio voters favored a goal of generating 100 percent of the state's electricity using clean and renewable sources like solar and wind by 2030. A [February 2019 poll](#) found that two-thirds of Ohio conservatives believe the state should generate at least half of its energy from renewable sources.. And an [October 2019 poll](#) found that nearly two-thirds of Ohio voters said developing renewable energy is the most important strategy to address Ohio's energy needs.

A recent [study from Ohio University](#) points to the importance of utility scale solar in Ohio. If Ohio was to aggressively move into a clean energy economy, it could create over 54,000 construction jobs, generate over \$9.6 billion in economic impacts, and generate \$2.7 billion in tax revenues. These are much-needed dollars that local communities can use for schools, fire departments, infrastructure, and other necessary expenses.

One common question about utility-scale solar projects is the environmental impact. An entire body of life-cycle analysis research finds that solar and wind energy have a [significantly lower](#) footprint than fossil fuel projects like mining, drilling, and fracking. Further, solar panels are compatible with other forms of conservation, such as native plants, pollinators, and even a [sheep farm](#). Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center plans to plant native grasses on site, which will help in controlling runoff into Darby Creek. When the project is at the end of its life span, the solar panels can be reused, recycled, or disposed, and the land restored to its original condition.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support the Pleasant Prairie Solar Energy Center, and I am personally very excited about the prospect of building it near my home. Due to all of these factors, I believe we should find a way to make this project happen as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your consideration

Cathy Cowan Becker
Grove City, OH

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