

THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

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In the Matter of the :
Application of Powell :
Creek Solar, LLC, for a : Case No. 20-1084-EL-BGN
Certificate of :
Environmental Compatibility:
and Public Need for :
a Solar Facility. :

PROCEEDINGS

before Ms. Lauren Augostini and Ms. Jacky St. John,
Administrative Law Judges for the Public Utilities
Commission of Ohio, via Webex, called at 6:00 p.m. on
Wednesday, March 31, 2021.

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8 On behalf of the Applicant.

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ALJ AUGOSTINI: Good evening, and welcome everyone. My name is Lauren Augostini and with me is Jacky St. John. We are Administrative Law Judges in the Legal Department of the Ohio Power Siting Board, and we have been assigned by the Board to this proceeding, which is Case No. 20-1084-EL-BGN.

One of our duties as the assigned Administrative Law Judges is conducting a public hearing in this case which involves the Application filed by Powell Creek Solar, LLC, for a Certificate to construct a solar farm in Putnam County, Ohio.

Due to the COVID 19 emergency that remains in effect under Executive Order No. 2020-01(D) issued by the Governor of Ohio in March 2020, tonight's hearing is being held through Webex, which enables interested parties and persons to offer testimony on the proposed project by telephone or video via the internet. The hearing is also being live streamed on YouTube.

Before we get started with the public hearing I would first like to address some preliminary issues. First, if you experience any technical difficulties during the hearing you have several options.

If your internet connection drops at any

point you can try to join Webex again by video, or you can participate by phone by dialing 1-408-418-9388 and entering meeting number 1793161665. If neither option is successful, please call the Board's Legal Department at 614-466-6843 for assistance.

Finally, if you merely wish to listen to or just watch the hearing, you can view the live stream on the YouTube channel, or listen to the hearing by phone. Again, dial 1-408-418-9388, and enter meeting number 1793161665.

More information about the Webex technical help options can be obtained through the chat feature which is available throughout the hearing.

You may click on the chat button at any time to obtain technical assistance or to ask procedural questions during the hearing.

The chat feature should not be used for any purpose such as to offer comments about the proposed project that is the subject of today's hearing. Please be aware that chats are recorded, are not part of the official record for this case, and should not be considered private.

As indicated by the Entry dated

January 25th, 2021, witnesses were required to preregister to testify. Individuals who have registered to provide testimony should be ready to speak when read their name from the registration list.

Individuals who are commenting by video will be unmuted by the Board Staff member when it is time for their testimony. If you are providing testimony by telephone a Board Staff member will call you at the phone number you provided when it is your turn to testify. Please bear with us as we work to cue up each individual, which may take some time.

It also may divert our attention at times from what is happening in the hearing. If this happens, please be patient and know that we are working to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate today.

Consistent with the Entry of January 25th, 2021, we ask that you keep your testimony to five minutes in length and avoid repetitive comments. To avoid unnecessary background noise we ask that all participants keep their microphones on mute unless you are commenting.

Again, if you have questions about this process as the hearing proceeds, please use the chat

1 function. Are there any questions before we
2 officially get started with tonight's proceeding?

3 (No response.)

4 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I don't see or hear any
5 questions, so at this time it appears that all of
6 our -- I believe all of our registrants are ready,
7 and let's proceed to the formal part of our
8 proceeding. I'll hand it over to you,
9 Judge St. John. Thank you.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. The Ohio
11 Power Siting Board has scheduled for hearing at this
12 time and place Case No. 20-1084-EL-BGN, which is
13 captioned In the Matter of the Application of Powell
14 Creek Solar, LLC, for a Certificate of Environmental
15 Compatibility and Public Need.

16 My name is Jacky St. John, and with me
17 is Lauren Augostini. We are Administrative Law
18 Judges in the Board's Legal Department, and we will
19 be conducting today's hearing.

20 I'd like to note that we also have Ohio
21 Power Siting Board Staff members attending this
22 conference, including Micah Schmidt, Jill Kocher,
23 Matt Schilling, Aubrey Barker, and Brittany Waugaman,
24 who will be overseeing the event on Webex and
25 YouTube.

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

MR. BORCHERS: Thank you, your Honor. Good evening. On behalf of the Applicant, Dylan Borchers and Sommer Sheely, with the law firm of Bricker & Eckler, 100 South Third Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. And I'll also note for the record that counsel for Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and counsel for Staff are not present this evening.

The subject of today's hearing is an Application filed by Powell Creek Solar, LLC, for the purpose of developing, constructing, and operating a new 150-megawatt solar farm. The solar farm would be located in Palmer and Liberty Townships in Putnam County. Powell Creek's Application was filed on October 7th, 2020, and was supplemented on October 29th, 2020.

On March 16th, 2021, Board Staff filed a Report of Investigation. This report is a recommendation from the Board's Staff and does not necessarily reflect what the Board's final determination will be.

1 The purpose of today's public hearing is
2 to receive testimony regarding Powell Creek Solar's
3 Application from entities and persons in the local
4 community who are affected by the proposed project,
5 but who are not parties to the case.

6 The public hearing is not a question and
7 answer session, but is an opportunity to let the
8 Board know what you think about the proposed project.
9 Today's public hearing is only one aspect of this
10 case. An evidentiary hearing is scheduled to begin
11 on Tuesday, April 13th, 2021, via Webex.

12 The purpose of the evidentiary hearing
13 is for the parties in this case, including the
14 Applicant, Intervenor, and Board Staff, to provide
15 testimony and other evidence regarding this project.

16 Tonight's hearing is being transcribed
17 by a Court Reporter from Armstrong & Okey. If you
18 plan to testify, please speak clearly so that the
19 Court Reporter can accurately reflect your comments
20 on the record. Please make sure that you verbally
21 respond to all questions asked so that they can be
22 properly transcribed.

23 After I finish with this introduction we
24 will call the individuals on the registration list to
25 testify about the proposed project. Each person who

1 registered to testify will be permitted to speak once
2 about the project.

3 If you are testifying tonight we will
4 ask you to take an oath or affirmation that what you
5 are about to say is the truth. Your testimony will
6 then be considered as part of the official record in
7 this case, and it will be reviewed by the Board
8 before a final decision is made on the Application.

9 Additionally, counsel for the parties in
10 this case, as well as Judge Augostini and myself,
11 will be permitted to ask you questions about your
12 testimony.

13 Should you decide that you do not want
14 to testify when we call your name from the
15 registration list, you can pass to the next witness.
16 Also, once you have finished testifying, or if you
17 are just here to observe, you may leave the hearing
18 at any time that you wish.

19 If individuals wish to supplement their
20 testimony with an exhibit for the Board's
21 consideration, a copy of the document, along with a
22 reference to Case No. 20-1084-EL-BGN, must be
23 provided to the Board no later than April 5th, 2021.

24 The document may be sent by email to
25 ContactOPSB@puco.ohio.gov, or by mail to Ohio Power

1 Siting Board, 180 East Broad Street, Attention:
2 Docketing Division, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

3 For those of you not testifying but who
4 wish to file a public comment regarding the proposed
5 project, you can do so in writing on the Board's
6 website by email at ContactOPSB@puco.ohio.gov, or by
7 mail to Ohio Power Siting Board, 180 East Broad
8 Street, Attention: Docketing Division, Columbus,
9 Ohio 43215. Written comments should reference Case
10 No. 20-1084-EL-BGN.

11 The Board appreciates your participation
12 in tonight's hearing and we want everyone who is
13 registered to testify to have the opportunity to do
14 so.

15 At this time we are going to begin with
16 the testimony. The first witness on our list tonight
17 is Ken Niese. Mr. Schmidt, could you please promote
18 the witness to a panelist role?

19 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Niese is a phone
20 witness. I believe he is on with our Staff.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you.

22 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I think we may need to
23 unmute him.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: Mr. Niese, can you hear
25 me? I'm not hearing anything. I'm not sure if the

1 problem is with Mr. Niese not being able to hear me,
2 or with us not being able to hear him.

3 MR. KEN NIESE: We were just talking
4 before.

5 ALJ ST. JOHN: We can hear you now. Is
6 this Mr. Niese?

7 MR. KEN NIESE: Can you hear me?

8 ALJ ST. JOHN: Yes, we can. I know
9 you're on the telephone, but even so, since we can't
10 see you I'm going to ask you to please raise your
11 right hand.

12 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay.

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you swear or
14 affirm that the testimony you're about to provide is
15 the truth?

16 MR. KEN NIESE: Yes, I do.

17 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. I have just a
18 few short questions for you before I invite you to
19 begin your testimony. First, please state and spell
20 your name for the record.

21 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. My name is Ken
22 Niese. First name is K-e-n, last name is Niese,
23 N-i-e-s-e.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please
25 provide your address, including the township.

1 MR. KEN NIESE: My address is 5824 State
2 Route 108, Ottawa, Ohio 45875, and my township is
3 Palmer.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Do you reside
5 or work within the project area?

6 MR. KEN NIESE: I reside in the area.

7 ALJ ST. JOHN: Great. Thank you.
8 Please proceed with your testimony.

9 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. Thank you very
10 much for letting me talk to the Board. To start off,
11 I want to let the Board know that I am not against
12 the Powell Creek Solar farm.

13 I am speaking to you about some concerns
14 I have with the safety on the intersection of State
15 Route 613 and State Route 108. If at any time
16 somebody is wanting to know on a map, let me know and
17 I can stop and go from there. Anyway, the
18 intersection there is just south of Miller City --
19 (inaudible.)

20 ALJ ST. JOHN: Mr. Niese, we are having
21 a little bit of audio issues here on our end. We
22 were hearing -- Mr. Niese, can you hear me?

23 MR. KEN NIESE: Yes, I can hear you now.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: So where you started
25 dropping off, so you had given the intersection, and

1 I was able to hear all of that, and then after you
2 gave the intersection, that's where your audio
3 started dropping off.

4 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. The intersection
5 of State Route 613 and 108. Presently three of the
6 four corners will not have solar panels installed on
7 them.

8 The one in question is in the southwest
9 corner of -- of the intersection, which will have a
10 fence within 100 feet of the leeway from both roads.

11 And I have lived on the corner of this
12 State Route 613 and 108 for 40-plus years. I have
13 witnessed many cars -- vehicles running through the
14 stop sign on State Route 613, and when the vehicles
15 from the other -- State Route 108 see them coming,
16 they will stop before a collision occurs.

17 Since the panels and the fence will be
18 about nine or ten feet high, this will block the view
19 of the vehicles running the stop sign on 613. So
20 instead of having a hundred foot setback on the
21 southwest corner, it needs to be a 400 foot setback
22 from both State Route 613, for better visual for
23 vehicles to see other vehicles when not stopping for
24 the stop sign.

25 This will only add an additional .57 of

1 an acre, or a little over a half acre, to the present
2 1.2 acres for the first 100 feet setback the way they
3 have it set out.

4 This is a small price for ultimate
5 safety. This is a very highly traveled road that the
6 Staff did not mention in this report to the Ohio
7 Power Siting Board listed on page 11 dealing with
8 traffic volume.

9 The second concern I have deals with the
10 aesthetics of the community. Again, dealing with
11 State Route 108 a half mile south of Miller City and
12 heading into Miller City, panels will be visible by
13 the high traffic volume.

14 Avangrid has options on land west of
15 their western side of the project 15 feet and south
16 of the Norfolk & Western Railroad. It contains 160
17 acres of land.

18 This land is contingent or can be
19 connected to the most western side of the project.
20 Removing the solar panels a half mile out of Miller
21 City along State Route 108 would help the aesthetics
22 of the town of Miller City, and relocating to the
23 western edge of the option lease ground would greatly
24 enhance the land and the town surrounding the area.

25 The cost may be higher, but the savings

1 by the solar panels reducing from 1,050 acres to 933
2 acres to achieve 150 megawatts, this is a significant
3 savings. (Inaudible.)

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: Mr. Niese, we're
5 generally hearing you, it's just every once in a
6 while you cut out. Would you mind just maybe moving
7 a few sentences back and starting again? It's just a
8 volume issue that we're noticing, so occasionally the
9 volume drops off too low to hear.

10 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. (Inaudible.)

11 ALJ ST. JOHN: We're still having --
12 it's a little bit better, but not great because we
13 do -- we are transcribing this, so we want to make
14 sure that we're getting -- you know, we really want
15 to hear your testimony. We want to make sure that we
16 get every word that you say.

17 Let me see. Could you maybe start now
18 and see if the audio is better at this point, just a
19 few seconds?

20 MR. KEN NIESE: Where do you want me to
21 start?

22 ALJ ST. JOHN: Mr. Niese, it also may be
23 helpful if you could just slow the speed down a
24 little bit for us. I think that could be helpful as
25 well.

1 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay.

2 ALJ ST. JOHN: Unfortunately, I was not
3 able to hear what you --

4 MR. KEN NIESE: 150 megawatts -- can you
5 hear me?

6 ALJ ST. JOHN: We can hear you now, yes.

7 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. I take it you got
8 it where I talk about the solar panels because of the
9 efficiency in reducing from 1,050 acres to 933 acres
10 to achieve the 150 megawatts?

11 ALJ ST. JOHN: Yes.

12 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. You have that?

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: Yes, we have got that.
14 Thank you.

15 MR. KEN NIESE: It's a significant
16 savings at having them rerouting the solar farm with
17 the aesthetics, or as having -- being a good neighbor
18 to the community.

19 The third concern I have is the noise
20 level from the inverters and tracking motors. As the
21 panels move will there be a constant metal grinding?
22 I don't know, I have no knowledge of it. So that's
23 one question.

24 Also the wind velocity could be another
25 problem as the community witnessed a duration in 2011

1 or 2012 of winds up to 100 miles an hour, which could
2 compromise the panels.

3 In conclusion, these concerns can be
4 mitigated by moving the solar field away from Miller
5 City to a more suitable area which I have described
6 earlier, away from the town that Avangrid has land,
7 or lease options. This will also free up land for
8 Miller City to grow. Thank you.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you, Mr. Niese. I
10 had just one question for you. I wanted to make sure
11 that I understood the first point that you were
12 making.

13 The intersection that you cited, your
14 suggestion and comment was you would prefer for the
15 fence that is currently planned to be 100 feet back
16 from the intersection to be 400 feet back from the
17 intersection; is that correct?

18 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. Yes, I said 400
19 feet back from the intersection instead of 100 feet.
20 That means 613 and 108.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you very
22 much. That was the only question that I had for you.
23 Are there any other questions for this witness from
24 counsel or the Bench before we let him go?

25 MR. BORCHERS: No questions from the

1 Applicant, your Honor.

2 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you. Thank
3 you very much, Mr. Niese. You are excused, and have
4 a nice evening.

5 MR. KEN NIESE: Okay. Thank you, too.

6 ALJ ST. JOHN: The next witness on our
7 list tonight is Anna Mae Wenzlick. Mr. Schmidt,
8 could you please promote the next witness to a
9 panelist role?

10 MR. SCHMIDT: Ms. Wenzlick, you've been
11 promoted. If you could enable the audio and video.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: Ms. Wenzlick, we can hear
13 you, we can't see you at the movement. Are you able
14 to turn your video on?

15 MS. WENZLICK: I don't want to be seen.

16 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay, that's fine. No
17 problem at all. We have people providing phone
18 testimony, so that's no problem.

19 Although we can't see you, I will ask
20 you at this time to please raise your right hand.
21 And do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're
22 about to provide is the truth?

23 MS. WENZLICK: I do.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state
25 and spell your name for the record.

1 MS. WENZLICK: My name is Anna Mae
2 Wenzlick, A-n-n-a, M-a-e, that's two words, and
3 Wenzlick, W-e-n-z-l-i-c-k. My address is 13854 State
4 Route 613, Ottawa, Ohio, and I'm in Palmer Township.

5 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Do you reside
6 or work within the project area?

7 MS. WENZLICK: I reside in the area.

8 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
9 And please proceed with your testimony.

10 MS. WENZLICK: We have an 80-acre field
11 right across from our home, and I'm wondering why we
12 don't get any of this information. The little bit of
13 information I got, I got from neighbors. I would
14 think that would be a significant amount of acreage
15 for us to know what's going on.

16 The map I have I'm not sure is the
17 correct map you're going to be using. One map I saw
18 the setback was quite far, the other map it's right
19 up to the road, so I would like to have the proper
20 map.

21 I was also concerned about maybe having
22 evergreens or some kind of plants put in place for
23 the aesthetics of the fencing. I would rather not
24 have it look like we live near a prison compound.

25 Another thing, I'm not really opposed to

1 a solar farm, I just think that we could have done a
2 better job of planning where to put these solar
3 panels, because it seems like the property that
4 you've taken are the most logical places for homes to
5 be built, where families can live and grow. As Ken
6 said, there are other ways to have this solar farm
7 without looking like a sore thumb sticking out there.

8 In the one paper I read they talked
9 about light travel in this area. That is not true.
10 When we first moved there I would walk on the highway
11 for exercise. There is no way I would walk on that
12 road now.

13 There is significant truck traffic.
14 Many, many times you hear these trucks coming down
15 the highway and they are screeching their brakes
16 because they have been daydreaming and they are about
17 to run the stop sign. Ken also talked about that.

18 And the height of these panels,
19 nine-and-a-half feet high. That's higher than a corn
20 crop. And when a farmer has a cornfield, he goes in
21 and knocks down a certain amount of the corn so
22 there's visibility all ways, and I think we need to
23 look at the visibility.

24 There's talk of noise. I understand
25 that the noise will be very loud when they are

1 installed. That's to be expected with any project,
2 but what about afterwards? I know a drip of water
3 can be minor, but if you have to listen to that drip,
4 drip, drip all day long, all night long, that can be
5 kind of a health hazard, I think.

6 Another thing with the lighting, they
7 talk about the lighting and it will be shining into
8 the solar field.

9 Now, I know that baseball diamonds, they
10 have lighting, but -- and it's shining into the
11 field. But there's a significant amount of lighting
12 that covers the whole area, so I'm wondering if we're
13 going to be living like we're next to the Wal-Mart
14 parking lot. Also, I wonder will a small animal be
15 able to activate the lights, or will the lights be on
16 all the time?

17 In one paper I read, you talk about
18 permanent and temporary impact that the project will
19 have. The way this is planned, I now see a dying
20 town because there is nowhere for the community to
21 grow. You've taken all the prime real estate and put
22 panels on it.

23 I also would like to ask where the
24 panels are coming from. Are they coming from China?
25 If so, I was wondering why we can't support our

1 country, maybe even our local area like Toledo. I
2 think there's a solar panel company up there. That's
3 all I have. Thank you.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you, Ms. Wenzlick.
5 I appreciate your testimony this evening. And it
6 sounded to me like you also had a number of questions
7 that you were posing.

8 As you know, tonight is not a question
9 and answer session, so we won't be able to provide
10 any answers to your questions this evening, but I
11 would recommend that you contact the Applicant to get
12 your questions answered directly, or if you have a
13 question about the Board process, you can contact the
14 Board, and that phone number is 866-270-6772. If you
15 didn't have that phone number already, I can repeat
16 that if you'd like me to.

17 MS. WENZLICK: Please repeat.

18 ALJ ST. JOHN: Will do. That number is
19 866-270-6772.

20 MS. WENZLICK: Thank you.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: You're welcome. Thank
22 you for your testimony, and you're excused at this
23 time.

24 The next witness on our list tonight is
25 Scott Niese. Mr. Schmidt, could you please promote

1 the next witness to a panelist role?

2 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Niese, you've been
3 promoted. If you can enable your audio and video.

4 MR. SCOTT NIESE: Okay.

5 ALJ ST. JOHN: We can hear you,
6 Mr. Niese. Would you like to turn your video on as
7 well?

8 MR. SCOTT NIESE: If I can figure it
9 out.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: Well, we can't see you at
11 this time. I'll let you know when your picture pops
12 up for us.

13 MR. SCOTT NIESE: Well, I can't figure
14 it out.

15 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. That's no
16 problem. No problem at all. Even though we can't
17 see you, I'll still ask you to raise your right hand.
18 And do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're
19 about to provide is the truth?

20 MR. SCOTT NIESE: Yes.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state
22 and spell your name for the record.

23 MR. SCOTT NIESE: Scott Niese,
24 S-c-o-t-t, N-i-e-s-e.

25 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please provide your

1 address, including the township.

2 THE WITNESS: 5946 State Route 108,
3 Ottawa, Ohio 45875, and Palmer Township.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. And do you
5 reside or work within the project area?

6 MR. SCOTT NIESE: Yes.

7 ALJ ST. JOHN: Do you reside in the
8 project area --

9 MR. SCOTT NIESE: Reside.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you. And
11 please proceed with your testimony.

12 MR. SCOTT NIESE: My biggest concern is
13 the intersection of State Route 613 and State Route
14 108.

15 I live in the northwest corner of that
16 intersection, and as Kenny said, they plan on having
17 the solar panels right up against the road on the
18 southwest section of that intersection, the corner of
19 that intersection.

20 I've lived here my whole life as well,
21 that's 40 years, and it is an extremely dangerous
22 intersection, especially from traffic coming from the
23 west, heading east on State Route 613.

24 Essentially coming south out of Miller
25 City, heading south out of Miller City on State Route

1 108, you can hardly see to the east or west as soon
2 as you get to that intersection.

3 Now, if you're heading the opposite
4 direction towards town on State Route 108, you can
5 see just fine. You can see for a mile in each
6 direction. You can see the traffic, west or east.

7 With the proposed solar panels as they
8 are now at this intersection, of the four corners of
9 that intersection you will only be able to see one
10 corner of it. You'll -- otherwise it is an extremely
11 dangerous intersection. I've witnessed several
12 people go through it on State Route 613.

13 The other issue I have is with what Anna
14 Mae said, the aesthetics of the panels and the chain
15 link fence surrounding it. We would really like to
16 see some sort of evergreens or something. That's all
17 I have.

18 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
19 your testimony. Are there any questions for this
20 witness from counsel or the Bench?

21 MR. BORCHERS: No, your Honor.

22 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
23 your testimony. You're excused, and have a nice
24 evening.

25 MR. SCOTT NIESE: You, too.

1 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Our next
2 witness on the list is Jim Erford. He does not
3 appear to be connected to Webex by internet or phone.

4 Members of the Board Staff will be
5 continuing to try and contact this individual to get
6 them connected so that they can provide testimony
7 this evening. In the meantime, we will move on to
8 our next witness, who is Mr. Greg Kuhlman.
9 Mr. Schmidt, could you please promote the witness to
10 a panelist role?

11 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Kuhlman has been
12 promoted, if he could even able his audio.

13 MR. ERFORD: I'm Jim Erford, the
14 previous witness.

15 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Great. Thank you.
16 Mr. Erford, we can see and hear you. At this time
17 I'd like you to please raise your right hand. Do you
18 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to
19 provide is the truth?

20 MR. ERFORD: Yes.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please state and spell
22 your name for the record.

23 MR. ERFORD: Jim Erford, J-i-m,
24 E-r-f-o-r-d. Address is 110 West Lane Cross Street,
25 Miller City, Ohio 45864.

1 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you live in a
2 township as well?

3 MR. ERFORD: It's in the Village, but
4 the Village is in Palmer Township.

5 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. And do you
6 reside or work within the project area?

7 MR. ERFORD: I reside in the town, and
8 the project is in this area, yeah.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you. Please
10 proceed with your testimony.

11 MR. ERFORD: Okay. I've lived in Miller
12 City most of my life, and I've been Mayor since 2004.
13 Miller City is in Putnam County, northwest Ohio, with
14 a population around 140.

15 We're a tight-knit community and we look
16 out for one another. I'm a strong supporter of the
17 Avangrid Renewables proposed 150-megawatt solar farm
18 near Miller City.

19 I don't have any personal or financial
20 interest in the project, but the town will greatly
21 benefit from the Powell Creek Solar farm.

22 Miller City and other local governments
23 have negotiated a 30-year pilot agreement for the
24 project that will result in \$26 million in revenue
25 going to the County, two townships, two school

1 districts, emergency response agencies, several
2 health and social services in Miller City.

3 By far the biggest impact of the
4 project, however, is that it will help Miller City
5 build a new sanitary sewer. A sanitary sewer project
6 is so important to our community that all project
7 stakeholders, all entities in the pilot agreement,
8 project landowners, and Avangrid are pitching in a
9 portion of their project revenue to make it happen.

10 The lack of sanitary sewer has limited
11 our town's growth for a long time, and impacts the
12 future as well. You can't build a new home in Miller
13 City unless you get a permit from the County to use
14 an existing septic system, or have an acre lot and
15 follow the rules of the County for building a new
16 home in the country.

17 This issue impacts businesses as well.
18 We have a convenience store in town that has a
19 holding tank for its restrooms that has to be pumped.

20 We have had requests for a permit to
21 build a car wash in town, but the County will not
22 permit it without a sanitary sewer.

23 Our city got water in 2002, and since
24 that time we have been trying to get a sanitary
25 sewer. In 2012 we hired an engineering firm to

determine the costs of installing a sanitary sewer system. They came up with a cost of nearly \$200 per household per month, which is unacceptable.

With the support of the Powell Creek project our sanitary sewer will cost \$60 per household per month, which is in line with other towns in the area that charge for sewer service.

The Village strongly supports the Powell Creek Solar project. We also have others here that support the project; Norm and Ann and Steve Leebret, Tom and Peg Niese, Denny Verhoff, Kerry Johnson, School Superintendent, and Gary Kuhlman. Thank you.

ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions for this witness from counsel or the Bench?

MR. BORCHERS: No, your Honor.

ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for your testimony. You're excused, and have a nice evening.

MR. ERFORD: Thank you.

ALJ ST. JOHN: The next witness on our list tonight is Greg Kuhlman. Do we have Mr. Kuhlman ready to testify?

MR. KUHLMAN: This is Greg Kuhlman.

ALJ ST. JOHN: Great. Please raise your

1 right hand, Mr. Kuhlman. Do you swear or affirm that
2 the testimony you're about to provide is the truth?

3 MR. KUHLMAN: Yes.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state
5 and spell your name for the record.

6 MR. KUHLMAN: My name is Greg Kuhlman,
7 G-r-e-g, K-u-h-l-m-a-n. I'm speaking for landowners
8 of the project. And 11649 Road E11, Ottawa, Ohio
9 45875.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. And do you
11 reside or work within the project area?

12 MR. KUHLMAN: Reside.

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please
14 proceed with your testimony.

15 MR. KUHLMAN: Speaking for the
16 landowners on the project, I own and operate an auto
17 repair business and own ground and farm in Liberty
18 Township.

19 I believe the Powell Creek Solar project
20 will be a benefit for the community, especially the
21 School District, for the future generations.

22 The Powell Creek Solar project, along
23 with landowners, two townships, Miller City School,
24 and Miller City town will upgrade and build a new
25 sewer system for the Village and Miller City.

1 I also think that this project will help
2 with the H2O project in cleaning up water and going
3 to Lake Erie.

4 I presently have 11 grandchildren who
5 are -- currently five of them go to school at Miller
6 City, three more in the near future. I think it's
7 our responsibility to set a good plan for the future
8 generations when we have an opportunity like this.

9 This project will benefit the residents
10 of Miller City, and Miller City School District
11 residents, for years to come. That's all I got to
12 say.

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
14 testimony. Are there any questions for this witness
15 from counsel or the Bench?

16 MR. BORCHERS: No questions, your Honor.

17 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
18 your testimony. You are excused. Before I let you
19 go, could I ask, it seems like there may be a few
20 witnesses who are testifying from the same computer.

21 Could you let me know who -- are there
22 any other witnesses who plan to testify just so we
23 can make sure we get everybody connected correctly?

24 MR. KUHLMAN: Next is Jacki Verhoff.

25 ALJ ST. JOHN: And is Jacki Verhoff with

1 you as well?

2 MR. KUHLMAN: She's here.

3 ALJ ST. JOHN: Great. Thank you. Good
4 evening, Ms. Verhoff.

5 MS. VERHOFF: Good evening.

6 ALJ ST. JOHN: Could you please raise
7 your right hand? Do you swear or affirm that the
8 testimony you're about to provide is the truth?

9 MS. VERHOFF: Yes, I do.

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

12 MS. VERHOFF: Jacki Verhoff, J-a-c-k-i,
13 V-e-r-h-o-f-f.

14 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please provide your
15 address including the township.

16 MS. VERHOFF: 5784 Route 15C,
17 Continental, Ohio 45831, in Palmer Township.

18 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. And do you
19 reside or work within the project area?

20 MS. VERHOFF: A couple miles away, yeah.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
22 And please proceed with your testimony.

23 MS. VERHOFF: Madam Chairman and Board
24 members, thank you for the opportunity to be here to
25 provide testimony on the Powell Creek Solar project.

1 My name is Jacki Verhoff, and I've lived
2 in Miller City my whole life. I am the owner of a
3 restaurant, Mac and Rita's, and the business has been
4 in my family for 64 years.

5 Miller City is a small town with less
6 than 200 people in it, a church, a high school, Mac
7 and Rita's, and two other food businesses. We all
8 depend on each other, which makes Miller City a great
9 place to live.

10 Activities at the church and school are
11 what helps to make the businesses and town a success.
12 Miller City has needed a sanitary sewer system for
13 over 20 years. We have tried many times, but it has
14 never worked out.

15 The town's growth has been limited
16 because of not having the sanitary sewer. Worse than
17 that is the fear that the school may have to close at
18 some point if the town doesn't get sewer. This would
19 devastate Mac and Rita's as well as the whole town of
20 Miller City.

21 Since Avangrid Renewables has proposed a
22 solar project near Miller City, I have the hope for
23 the growth of our town again.

24 I am not getting any money from the
25 project, but am thrilled that the pilot negotiated

1 for the project would help to pay for the sanitary
2 sewer. Thank you for your consideration on this
3 matter.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
5 testimony. Are there any questions for this witness
6 from counsel or the Bench?

7 MR. BORCHERS: No questions, your Honor.

8 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
9 your testimony. Looks like the next witness we have
10 on our list is Amy Sealts.

11 MS. VERHOFF: She's here, too.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you.

13 MS. SEALTS: Good evening.

14 ALJ ST. JOHN: Good evening, Ms. Sealts.
15 Please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm
16 that the testimony you're about to provide is the
17 truth?

18 MS. SEALTS: I do.

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

21 MS. SEALTS: Name is Amy, A-m-y, my last
22 name is Sealts, S-e-a-l-t-s.

23 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please provide your
24 address, including the township.

25 MS. SEALTS: My address is 340 Mohawk

1 Drive, Ottawa, Ohio, and I reside in the Village of
2 Ottawa.

3 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you reside or work
4 within the project area?

5 MS. SEALTS: I do work within the
6 project area.

7 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please
8 proceed with your testimony.

9 MS. SEALTS: Your Honor, Staff, and
10 Board members, my testimony is a little different
11 than some of the others tonight.

12 I'm the Director of Economic Development
13 in Putnam County, and all of the work that we do
14 focuses on attracting capital investments to Putnam
15 County, which includes the Village of Miller City and
16 both of the impacted townships.

17 And the second part of our job is
18 focused on attracting and retaining employment here
19 in Putnam County, and so those are my two points.

20 The Powell Creek Solar project, as
21 you've heard from others, will bring millions of
22 dollars of new tax dollars into Putnam County, and
23 this helps fund both the infrastructure and schools
24 and the residents and jobs in our County.

25 Contrary to what some believe, it

1 actually opens up the opportunity for new commercial
2 development and residential development. It does not
3 stop those things, it opens those things up.

4 Not only does it help the tax base for
5 Miller City and the two affected townships in Putnam
6 County, but it also helps the regional tax base and
7 elevates the entire State of Ohio.

8 As you know, companies are very
9 interested in what to procure. Less expensive energy
10 and renewable energy helps them do that, and they
11 will locate their businesses wherever it is that they
12 can find renewable energy.

13 Ohio stands to generate more than \$18
14 billion from solar projects, and up to 54,000
15 construction jobs, which is a fact from the Ohio
16 Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy. And more
17 jobs are actually created from solar projects and
18 renewable energy projects than fossil fuel projects,
19 so it definitely benefits employment.

20 The availability of renewable energy, we
21 feel, drives capital and drives investments locally,
22 regionally, and for the State of Ohio. And it puts
23 us in a better position to retain and attract
24 companies and retain those to bring stable and high
25 quality jobs to people here locally and throughout

1 the State of Ohio. Thank you.

2 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
3 testimony. I have one quick question for you. You
4 had talked about your employment. Are you testifying
5 tonight on behalf of yourself as an individual, or on
6 behalf of your employer?

7 MS. SEALTS: I am the Director of the
8 Putnam County Community Improvement Corporation, and
9 I am testifying as myself and as an agent for that
10 corporation, which provides services to both the
11 Village of Miller City and the townships and the
12 school.

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right.

14 MS. SEALTS: So dual.

15 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Are there any
16 other questions for this witness?

17 MR. BORCHERS: No, your Honor.

18 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
19 your testimony. Looks like the next witness we have
20 is Richard Dobmeyer.

21 MS. SEALTS: He's here.

22 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you. Good
23 evening. Please raise your right hand. Do you swear
24 or affirm that the testimony you're about to provide
25 is the truth?

1 MR. DOBMEYER: Yes.

2 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state
3 and spell your name for the record.

4 MR. DOBMEYER: Richard, R-i-c-h-a-r-d,
5 Dobmeyer, D-o-b-m-e-y-e-r.

6 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. And please
7 provide your address, including the township.

8 MR. DOBMEYER: 2249 Road 16,
9 Continental, Ohio 45831, Palmer Township.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you reside or work
11 within the project area?

12 MR. DOBMEYER: No, I do not.

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you. And
14 please proceed with your testimony.

15 MR. DOBMEYER: Madam Chairman and Board
16 members, good evening. I own 46 acres of ground just
17 outside Miller City that will be part of the solar
18 farm.

19 I have been a part of the Miller City
20 community all my life as I was raised on a farm five
21 miles from town, graduated from Miller City High
22 School, as did my wife, and both of our sons.

23 Over the years I would listen to
24 conversations about how a sewage system would benefit
25 the town and the school. There were many ideas and

1 opinions of the benefits, but it always boiled down
2 to one thing; that a community of this size could not
3 secure the finances to build a multimillion dollar
4 project, so the idea was just a dream.

5 Three years ago I received a call
6 wanting me to attend a meeting. A company by the
7 name of Avangrid was interested in putting a solar
8 farm at the edge of town, and my ground might be
9 included in this farm.

10 I attended the meeting and it was
11 brought up about how much revenue would be raised
12 from the solar farm for the local economic.

13 The question came up would there be a
14 way that the town and school could secure enough
15 money to install a sewer system from the solar farm
16 revenue. The answer was yes, but it would take
17 cooperation and sharing.

18 After many meetings and different
19 suggestions, it was agreed that each entity, the
20 Putnam County Commissioners, Palmer Township, Liberty
21 Township, the school, the town, and the landowners
22 would contribute a percentage of the money they would
23 receive toward paying for this system. Avangrid
24 itself has even agreed to put money toward this
25 project.

1 Seven different entities agreeing and
2 cooperating on a plan to make this happen, everyone
3 was involved in these discussions, no one was blind
4 sided. This all happened because of cooperation. I
5 personally would like to call that cooperation
6 community pride, but it will not be possible without
7 the solar farm.

8 So as you look through the paperwork,
9 check the maps, listen to the comments at the public
10 meetings, I hope you will see the benefits and
11 positive affects this solar farm will have on our
12 community, and allow this solar farm to be built so
13 our community's dream can become a reality. Thank
14 you for listening.

15 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
16 testimony. Are there any questions for this witness?

17 MR. BORCHERS: No questions. Thank you.

18 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
19 your testimony. It looks like our next witness on
20 the list is Roger Niese. Does he happen to be there
21 as well?

22 MR. DOBMEYER: He's right here.

23 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Good evening,
24 Mr. Niese.

25 MR. ROGER NIESE: Good evening.

1 ALJ ST. JOHN: Do you swear or affirm
2 that the testimony you're about to provide is the
3 truth?

4 MR. ROGER NIESE: Yes, I do.

5 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please state and spell
6 your name for the record.

7 MR. ROGER NIESE: My name is Roger
8 Niese, R-o-g-e-r, last name, Niese, N-i-e-s-e.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please provide your
10 address, including the township.

11 MR. ROGER NIESE: My address is 15476
12 Road B, Leipsic, Ohio 45856, and my township is
13 Palmer Township.

14 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you reside or work
15 within the project area?

16 MR. ROGER NIESE: I do not.

17 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
18 And please proceed with your testimony.

19 MR. ROGER NIESE: Good evening, Madam
20 Chairman and Board members. I am the Fiscal Officer
21 for Palmer Township, and I do believe the Powell
22 Creek Solar project would be a huge benefit and asset
23 to Miller City School District, the Miller City
24 Village, Palmer and Liberty Townships, and all the
25 residents.

1 Also, let us not forget that this solar
2 project will help out every resident in Putnam County
3 by the financial benefits of the pilot payments, the
4 payment in lieu of taxes to all of the Putnam County
5 taxing agencies.

6 It will also help Miller City Village
7 and Miller City School District to finance a much
8 needed sanitary system through the influx of the tax
9 revenue generated by the solar project.

10 I would like to personally thank
11 everyone here for their time and consideration
12 regarding this solar project. Thank you.

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
14 testimony. I do have one question for you. Your
15 testimony tonight, is that on behalf of you as an
16 individual, or you on behalf of your position with
17 your employer?

18 MR. ROGER NIESE: Me individually.

19 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
20 Are there any other questions for this witness?

21 MR. BORCHERS: No, your Honor.

22 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
23 your testimony, and you are excused. The next
24 witness we have on our list tonight is David Niese.

25 MR. ROGER NIESE: He is here.

1 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Good evening,
2 Mr. Niese. Please raise your right hand. Do you
3 swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to
4 provide is the truth?

5 MR. DAVID NIESE: I do.

6 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state
7 and spell your name for the record.

8 MR. DAVID NIESE: David, D-a-v-i-d,
9 Niese, N-i-e-s-e.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please provide your
11 address, including the township.

12 MR. DAVID NIESE: 4633 Road 13C,
13 Leipsic, L-e-i-p-s-i-c, 45856.

14 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you reside or work
15 within the project area?

16 MR. DAVID NIESE: I do both.

17 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
18 And please provide with your testimony.

19 MR. DAVID NIESE: My name is David
20 Niese. I have served as Palmer Township Trustee for
21 the last 16 years. I'm a lifetime resident of the
22 Miller City area. I went to Miller City School. My
23 wife and I were married in Miller City. And I've own
24 and operate my own tree service for over 40 years out
25 of Miller City.

1 As Trustee our goals are better
2 assisted -- to better assist the Village in any way
3 possible, improve our township's roadways with cement
4 stabilizing and fresh asphalt, and also caving
5 roadside ditches. This provides safer roads for our
6 School District and all the residents of our
7 township.

8 For years Palmer Township has supported
9 Miller City in their efforts to extend a waterline to
10 the community for servicing the school, the Village,
11 and the fire department, which has been completed.
12 Also to install a sanitary system within Miller City.

13 In 2019 Avangrid introduced themselves
14 to Miller City and Palmer Township, and proposed the
15 Powell Creek Solar farm, a 150-watt solar project
16 involving approximately 1,300 acres in Palmer
17 Township and Liberty Township.

18 The Trustees supported the project
19 because we think that that was the right thing to do.
20 This is one project that could be our answer to
21 improving more township roadways, promoting the
22 Village, and protecting our School District.

23 Numerous meetings were held explaining
24 the pros and the cons of the project to all the
25 stakeholders, including the Village, the School

1 District, landowners, Palmer and Liberty Townships,
2 and we believe Avangrid has met any and all
3 requirements.

4 Therefore, the Palmer Township Trustees
5 are requesting the Ohio Power Siting Board to
6 expedite their decision by granting the permit to
7 construct as soon as possible, and allow the Powell
8 Creek project to move forward. Thank you, Palmer
9 Township Trustees. That's it.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
11 testimony. It sounded like you were testifying on
12 behalf of the Trustees, is that correct?

13 MR. DAVID NIESE: Yes.

14 ALJ ST. JOHN: And are you testifying on
15 behalf of yourself as an individual as well?

16 MR. DAVID NIESE: Actually both, yes.

17 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
18 your testimony. Are there any other questions for
19 this witness?

20 MR. BORCHERS: No, your Honor.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
22 your testimony. You're excused. Have a nice
23 evening.

24 MR. DAVID NIESE: Thank you.

25 ALJ ST. JOHN: Our next witness on our

1 list is Jean Forster.

2 MS. FORSTER: Yes, I'm here.

3 ALJ ST. JOHN: Good evening,
4 Ms. Forster. Please raise your right hand. Do you
5 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to
6 provide is the truth?

7 MS. FORSTER: I do.

8 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state
9 and spell your name for the record.

10 MS. FORSTER: Jean, J-e-a-n, Forster,
11 F-o-r-s-t-e-r.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: And please provide your
13 address, including the township.

14 MS. FORSTER: 15735 Road E, Continental,
15 Ohio 45831, Palmer Township.

16 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you reside or work
17 within the project area?

18 MS. FORSTER: I work in the Village.

19 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
20 And please proceed with your testimony.

21 MS. FORSTER: Hello everyone, and thanks
22 for letting me speak here tonight on behalf of the
23 Powell Creek Solar project.

24 I am a lifelong resident of this area,
25 graduated from Miller City School, drive school bus

1 for the School District, and own and operate an
2 excavating company based here in Palmer Township.

3 Agriculture is one of the biggest, if
4 not the biggest industry in this area. So the
5 opportunity to have revenue from this project helps
6 our school, town, and township close the gap between
7 what needs to be improved and what we can't afford to
8 improve, is a big deal for our community.

9 We all pitch in, do more with less, help
10 when we can, but when it comes to improvements to the
11 school, roads, and infrastructure, this takes
12 resources that are lacking, and this project would
13 alleviate some of those problems while producing
14 clean energy in the process.

15 I mentioned agriculture earlier, and the
16 agriculture industry sent a very strong message of
17 support when the farmers and landowners committed
18 their property to this project, something they never
19 would do unless they believed it was important and
20 would bring positive results.

21 The health, safety, and future of our
22 community will benefit greatly by this project, and
23 it is my hope that it continues without any delays.
24 Thanks again.

25 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for

1 your testimony. Are there any questions for this
2 witness?

3 MR. BORCHERS: No, your Honor.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
5 your testimony. You are excused. Our next witness
6 is Terry Short.

7 MS. FORSTER: And no, he's not here.

8 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. I'm not sure
9 if Mr. Short is connected on Webex.

10 MR. SCHMIDT: He is not.

11 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. So since he's not
12 connected, Staff here -- we will continue trying to
13 reach out to Mr. Short and get him connected so that
14 he can provide his testimony this evening, but in the
15 meantime we'll move on to our next witness, who is
16 Leroy Kahle. Is Mr. Kahle there by any chance?

17 SPEAKER: Yes, he is. He'll be right
18 here.

19 ALJ ST. JOHN: Good evening.

20 MR. KAHLE: Good evening.

21 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please raise your right
22 hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony
23 you're about to provide is the truth?

24 MR. KAHLE: I do.

25 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state

1 and spell your name for the record.

2 MR. KAHLE: My name is Leroy Kahle,
3 L-e-r-o-y, K-a-h-l-e.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
5 And I apologize for mispronouncing your name. Please
6 provide your address, including the township.

7 MR. KAHLE: My address is 8304 Road 15,
8 Ottawa, Ohio 45875.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you reside or work
10 within the project area?

11 MR. KAHLE: I work in the Village.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
13 And please proceed with your testimony.

14 MR. KAHLE: Madam Chairman, I'd like to
15 wish a good afternoon to you and the Board members.
16 I am a lifelong resident of the Miller City area.

17 My family owns a construction company in
18 the Village of Miller City, and we have been here
19 approximately 40 years. I am a former Miller
20 City/New Cleveland Board of Education member, which I
21 was on that board for 20 years.

22 I am aware of the financial struggles
23 faced today to provide a quality curriculum to
24 educate the students at Miller City/New Cleveland. I
25 am sure that the monies received from this project

1 would certainly help provide needed revenue to the
2 School District.

3 Monies generated would also add revenue
4 for the Village to help install needed improvements
5 throughout the Village. Local townships and
6 government and County government would also get a
7 needed financial boost.

8 I support this project because in my
9 opinion it benefits the School District, the Village,
10 and the surrounding community. Thank you very much
11 for your time.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
13 testimony. Are there any questions for this witness?

14 MR. BORCHERS: No questions, your Honor.

15 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
16 your testimony. You're excused, and have a nice
17 evening.

18 MR. KAHLE: Thank you. You too.

19 ALJ ST. JOHN: Our next witness tonight
20 is Tyler Niese.

21 MR. SCHMIDT: We're still currently
22 trying to contact Mr. Niese. If we go ahead and skip
23 to the bottom of the list with Mr. Johnson, we will
24 continue to try contacting the two witnesses that we
25 have been unable to reach.

1 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you for that
2 update.

3 SPEAKER: I'm not Mr. Johnson, he's in
4 the next room. He'll be right here. And Gary
5 Kuhlman is here as well if he would be allowed to
6 speak after -- they were the two people that were
7 left off of the list. Mr. Johnson is approaching the
8 screen right now.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening.

11 ALJ ST. JOHN: Good evening,
12 Mr. Johnson. Could you please raise your right hand?
13 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're
14 about to provide is the truth?

15 MR. JOHNSON: I do.

16 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please state and spell
17 your name for the record.

18 MR. JOHNSON: My name is Kerry Duane
19 Johnson, K-e-r-r-y, D-u-a-n-e, J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

20 ALJ ST. JOHN: And please provide your
21 address, including the township.

22 MR. JOHNSON: My address is 201 South
23 Ashbury Lane, Ottawa, Ohio, Ottawa Township.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: Do you reside or work
25 within the project area?

1 MR. JOHNSON: I do not.

2 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.

3 And please proceed with your testimony.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. First, please
5 allow me to express my appreciation to the Board for
6 being provided the time to deliver testimony this
7 evening regarding this tremendous opportunity for the
8 Village of Miller City, the Miller City/New Cleveland
9 School District and all Village and School District
10 residents.

11 I know this Board is fully educated
12 about the environmental and financial benefits of
13 renewable energy projects such as this one, so if
14 you'll allow, I would like to briefly share with you
15 the direct benefits that the Powell Creek Solar
16 project would have for the Village of Miller City and
17 for its most prized asset, the Miller City/New
18 Cleveland Local School District.

19 The fortunes of a rural town and its
20 affiliated School District often go hand in hand.
21 The Villages of Miller City and New Cleveland are
22 both terrific places to live and raise a family.

23 Similarly, the Miller City/Cleveland
24 Local School District is, by any measure, one of the
25 highest performing schools in the entire State of

Ohio year in and year out, thereby appealing to families who want the best education for their children. The only missing ingredient is the opportunity for growth. This project serves as that opportunity.

The revenue generated from the Powell Creek Solar project would subsequently create an opening for the Village of Miller City to install a much needed sanitary system.

What would naturally follow would be residential housing development, followed by increased school enrollment, and hopefully in the long term, some industry.

All these things serve as tangible benefits to the Village, the school, and the surrounding community. However, without this project, none of that would be realized and the chance for Village and school growth with vanish.

I want to end my testimony by expressing my appreciation to all of the project stakeholders and their years long commitment. Mr. Jeff Reinkemeyer of Avangrid Renewables, along with Mr. Martin Kuhlman, the Village and Township representatives, and of course, the landowners.

All have sacrificed a multitude of hours

1 working together to bring this potential project to
2 where it is today. They all did so because they
3 recognize, as I do, the importance of this one-time
4 opportunity to make a difference in the future of the
5 Village, the surrounding community, and the Miller
6 City/New Cleveland local school district. I thank
7 you for your time.

8 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
9 your testimony. Are there any questions for this
10 witness from counsel or the Bench?

11 MR. BORCHERS: No questions, your Honor.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
13 your testimony. You're excused, and have a nice
14 evening.

15 I believe our next witness is Gary
16 Kuhlman. Good evening, Mr. Kuhlman. Please raise
17 your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the
18 testimony you're about to provide is the truth?

19 MR. GARY KUHLMAN: Yes, do I.

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

22 MR. GARY KUHLMAN: My name is Gary
23 Kuhlman, G-a-r-y, K-u-h-l-m-a-n. I -- my address is
24 6360 Road 10, Leipsic, Ohio, and I'm a Trustee in
25 Liberty Township, and I agree with everything that

1 was said here tonight, everything.

2 But I want you to know that this school,
3 I went to school here, my kids went to school here,
4 my grand kids did, and we want to keep it here.

5 And this project here, this project,
6 what they got going here would be a great help to
7 this school for the community. I could never figure
8 out why we -- they could never get Miller City to
9 grow.

10 This is what they need the sewer system
11 for. They have to have something like this to make
12 everything grow, and as being a Trustee -- I was a
13 Trustee for 31 years, and back 20 years ago, already
14 they was talking sewer in Miller City. They can
15 never do it.

16 Since that time I got a daughter that
17 lives here in Miller City. There's no way they could
18 afford to put a sewer system in on their own as far
19 as the town, so if they can get some help from this
20 company to put a solar system in, it would be a great
21 help and it would be appreciated by everybody around.
22 Thank you.

23 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
24 testimony. I have just two quick questions for you.
25 You mentioned that you're a Trustee. Are you

1 providing testimony tonight on behalf of the
2 Trustees, or on behalf of yourself as an individual?

3 MR. GARY KUHLMAN: On both, really.

4 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. And then my
5 last question is, do you reside or work within the
6 project area?

7 MR. GARY KUHLMAN: Reside in Liberty
8 Township.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Well, thank
10 you. Are there any other questions for this witness?

11 MR. BORCHERS: No, your Honor. Thank
12 you.

13 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you
14 very much for your testimony. I believe you're the
15 last witness testifying tonight at that location, is
16 that correct?

17 SPEAKER: Yes, that is correct.

18 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you
19 very much. We have two more witnesses tonight, who I
20 believe are phone witnesses. So our next witness
21 this evening is Tyler Niese. Do we have Tyler
22 connected to the event at this point?

23 MR. SCHMIDT: Yes.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: Is this Mr. Niese?

25 MR. TYLER NIESE: Yes.

1 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please raise your right
2 hand. And do you swear or affirm that the testimony
3 you're about to provide is the truth?

4 MR. TYLER NIESE: Yes.

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

7 MR. TYLER NIESE: It's Tyler Niese,
8 T-y-l-e-r, N-i-e-s-e.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: And please provide your
10 address, including the township.

11 MR. TYLER NIESE: It's 6387 Road 16,
12 Continental, Ohio 45831, Palmer Township.

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

15 MR. TYLER NIESE: No, I'm out.

16 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
17 And please proceed with your testimony.

18 MR. TYLER NIESE: Okay. Pretty much
19 like everyone, I agree -- or like most people, I
20 agree with the solar project going into Miller City.

21 Sounds like it's going to bring a good
22 deal of revenue in the Village in turn to help it
23 grow. Sounds like it's going to give the funds for
24 the Village in the right direction where a lot of
25 people see it want to go.

1 My only concern was on the southwest
2 corner there on 613 and 108, I used to live like
3 right in the house on the northwest corner there for
4 about 20 years, and just see a lot of traffic, a lot
5 of semis that would pull past that intersection right
6 there, and with the solar panels being, I guess in
7 close proximity to the road, with their height, their
8 elevation, I didn't know if that was going to create
9 like a bigger issue or more of a problem with the
10 vehicles, I guess going through that intersection.
11 But that was pretty much my only concern with it.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Did you have
13 any other testimony to offer this evening, or have
14 you completed your testimony? I just didn't want to
15 cut you off if you still had more that you wanted to
16 say.

17 MR. TYLER NIESE: No, you're fine. That
18 was pretty much it. That was the only thing I had to
19 say.

20 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Well, thank
21 you for your testimony. Do we have any questions for
22 this witness from counsel or the Bench?

23 MR. BORCHERS: No questions, your Honor.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
25 your testimony. You're excused, and have a nice

1 evening.

2 The next witness on our list tonight is
3 Terry Short, who I believe is also calling in on the
4 phone. Do we have Mr. Short connected via telephone?

5 SPEAKER: Your Honor, I have a phone
6 witness, Mr. Terry Short, on the line.

7 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Mr. Short,
8 can you hear me?

9 MR. SHORT: Yes, ma'am.

10 ALJ ST. JOHN: Good evening. Even
11 though you're on the phone and we can't see you, I'd
12 like to ask you to raise your right hand. And do you
13 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to
14 provide is the truth?

15 MR. SHORT: Yes.

16 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you. Please state
17 and spell your name for the record.

18 MR. SHORT: Terry Short, T-e-r-r-y,
19 S-h-o-r-t.

20 ALJ ST. JOHN: Please provide your
21 address, including the township.

22 MR. SHORT: 8157 South Bridge A, Maumee,
23 Ohio, and that's my employment township.

24 ALJ ST. JOHN: And do you reside or work
25 within the project area?

1 MR. SHORT: I work.

2 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.

3 And please proceed with your testimony.

4 MR. SHORT: Good evening. My name is
5 Terry Short. I am a business representative for
6 Local Union No. 8 out of the International Brotherhood
7 of Electrical Workers, IBEW.

8 I am here tonight to speak in support of
9 the Powell Creek Solar project. I completed the IBEW
10 apprenticeship program in 2007. The training I
11 received in the apprenticeship program allowed me to
12 learn a trade debt free, build a career one job at a
13 time, and most importantly support my family.

14 I support the Powell Creek Solar project
15 and the jobs it will bring to our community. I
16 believe the jobs the Powell Creek project will create
17 are pathways to lifelong careers in the electrical
18 industry.

19 In addition to the clear benefit from
20 job creation, Powell Creek will also bring a steady
21 stream of revenue that will benefit essential
22 services in our community and provide a source of
23 revenue for important infrastructure updates that
24 long-term will create even more jobs in our
25 community. I appreciate the opportunity to

1 participate in this evening's public hearing. Thank
2 you.

3 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you for
4 your testimony. I have one question for you. You
5 mentioned that you are a union representative. Are
6 you testifying tonight on behalf of yourself as an
7 individual, or on behalf of your union?

8 MR. SHORT: On behalf of the union.

9 ALJ ST. JOHN: All right. Thank you.
10 Are there any questions for this witness?

11 MR. BORCHERS: No questions, your Honor.

12 ALJ ST. JOHN: Thank you for your
13 testimony. You're excused, and have a nice evening.

14 MR. SHORT: Thank you.

15 ALJ ST. JOHN: That concludes the
16 statements from those individuals who registered to
17 provide testimony tonight.

18 The Board appreciates all of your
19 participation in this public hearing. I'd like to
20 thank everyone who provided testimony or who joined
21 us for the public hearing, whether it was via Webex,
22 over the phone, or with the YouTube live stream.

23 I'd also like to remind you that if you
24 did not have a chance to make a comment tonight, or
25 have an additional comment that you did not make this

1 evening, you're welcome to provide a public comment
2 on the docketing system for this case, and those
3 comments can be submitted via email or via U.S. mail.

4 If you'd like to submit that comment via
5 email you can do so by sending the comment to OPSB --
6 excuse me, the email address is
7 ContactOPSB@puco.ohio.gov.


8 And with that, this concludes today's
9 public hearing. Enjoy the rest of your evening, and
10 we are adjourned.

11 (Thereupon, the hearing was
12 adjourned at 7:24 p.m.)

13 - - -

CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the foregoing
is a true and correct transcript of the proceedings
taken by me in this matter on Wednesday, March 31,
2021, and carefully compared with my original
stenographic notes.


Valerie Grubaugh
Valerie J. Grubaugh,
Court Reporter and Notary
Public in and for the State
of Ohio.

My commission expires August 11, 2021.

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Case No(s). 20-1084-EL-BGN

Summary: Transcript March 31, 2021

In the Matter of the Application of Powell Creek Solar, LLC, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for a Solar Facility. electronically filed by Mr. Ken Spencer on behalf of Armstrong & Okey, Inc. and Grubaugh, Valerie