

BEFORE THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

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In the Matter of the :
Application of AEUG Union :
Solar, LLC, for a :
Certificate of : Case No. 20-1405-EL-BGN
Environmental :
Compatibility and Public :
Need. :

- - -

PROCEEDINGS

before Ms. Lauren Augostini and Mr. Matthew Sandor,
Administrative Law Judge, at the Ohio Power Siting
Board, via Webex, called at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday,
June 3, 2021.

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ARMSTRONG & OKEY, INC.
222 East Town Street, Second Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5201
(614) 224-9481 - (800) 223-9481

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APPEARANCES:

Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease, LLP
By Mr. Michael Settineri
52 East Gay Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

On behalf of the Applicant.

Frost Brown Todd LLC
By Mr. Thaddeus M. Boggs
10 West Broad Street, Suite 2300
Columbus, Ohio 43215

On behalf of the Intervenor Union County
Commissioners.

Office of the Union County
Prosecuting Attorney
By Mr. Thayne D. Gray,
Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
249 West Fifth Street
Marysville, Ohio 43040

On behalf of the Intervenor Union Soil
and Water Conservation District and York
Township Board of Township Trustees.

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1 Thursday Evening Session,
 2 June 3, 2021.

3 - - -

4 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Let's go on the record.
 5 Good evening, everyone, and welcome. My name is
 6 Lauren Augostini, and with me is Matt Sandor. We are
 7 Administrative Law Judges in the Legal Department of
 8 the Ohio Power Siting Board and have been assigned by
 9 the Board to this proceeding which is Case No.
 10 20-1405-EL-BGN.

11 One of our duties as the assigned
 12 Administrative Law Judges is conducting a public
 13 hearing in this case which involves the application
 14 filed by AEUG Union Solar, LLC, for a Certificate to
 15 Construct a Solar-Powered Electric Generation
 16 Facility in Union County, Ohio.

17 Due to the COVID-19 emergency declared in
 18 Executive Order No. 2020-01D issued by the Governor
 19 of Ohio in March 2020, tonight's hearing is being
 20 held through Webex which enables interested persons
 21 to offer testimony on the proposed project by
 22 telephone or video via the internet. The hearing is
 23 also being live streamed on YouTube.

24 Before we get started with the public
 25 hearing, I would first like to address some

1 preliminary issues. First, if you experience any
2 technical difficulties during the hearing, you have
3 several options. If your internet connection drops
4 at any point, you can try to join Webex again by
5 video, or you can participate by phone by dialing
6 1-408-418-9388 and entering meeting No. 1299508994.
7 If neither option is successful, please call the
8 Board's Legal Department at (614) 466-6843 for
9 assistance.

10 Finally, if you merely wish to listen to
11 or watch the hearing, you can view the live stream on
12 our YouTube channel or listen to the hearing by
13 phone.

14 More information about the Webex
15 technical help options can be obtained through the
16 chat feature which is available throughout the
17 hearing. You may click on the chat button at any
18 time to obtain technical assistance or to ask
19 procedural questions during the hearing. The chat
20 feature should not be used for any other purpose such
21 as to offer comments about the proposed project that
22 is the subject of today's hearing. Please be aware
23 that the chats are recorded and are not part of the
24 official record in this case and should not be
25 considered private.

1 As indicated by the entry dated March 17,
2 2021, witnesses were required to preregister to
3 testify. Individuals who have registered to provide
4 testimony should be ready to speak when we read their
5 name from the registration list. Individuals who are
6 commenting by video will be unmuted by a Board Staff
7 member when it is time for their testimony. If you
8 are providing testimony by telephone, a Board Staff
9 member will call you at the phone number you provided
10 when it is your turn to testify. Please bear with us
11 as we work to queue up each individual which may take
12 some time.

13 To avoid unnecessary background noise, we
14 ask that all participants keep their microphones on
15 mute unless you are commenting. Again, if you have
16 any questions about this process, please use the chat
17 function.

18 Are there any questions before we
19 officially get started with tonight's proceeding?

20 I will take the silence as we are ready
21 to go. So let's proceed to the more formal portion.
22 Thank you.

23 ALJ SANDOR: Thanks, Judge Augustini.

24 The Ohio Power Siting Board has scheduled
25 for hearing at this time and place Case

1 No. 20-1405-EL-BGN which is captioned in the Matter
2 of the Application of AEUG Union Solar, LLC, for a
3 Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public
4 Need.

5 I would like to note we -- we also have
6 Ohio Power Siting Board Staff members attending this
7 conference including Micah Schmidt, Jill Kocher, Matt
8 Butler, Aubrey Barker, and Brittany Waugaman who will
9 be overseeing the event on Webex and YouTube.

10 At this time we will take the appearances
11 of counsel for the parties to this case. We will
12 begin with the Applicant.

13 MR. SETTINERI: Yes, good evening, your
14 Honors. On behalf of AEUG Union Solar, LLC, Michael
15 Settineri with the law firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour
16 & Pease, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

17 ALJ SANDOR: Next on behalf of the
18 Intervenors. First, Union Soil and Water
19 Conservation District.

20 Hearing none --

21 MR. GRAY: I'm sorry. I missed the mute
22 button. Thayne Gray, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
23 for Union County Soil and Water Conservation
24 District, and I get my townships confused. I believe
25 it is York and Wa -- not Washington, maybe just York

1 Township.

2 ALJ SANDOR: Just York Township, correct.

3 MR. GRAY: Okay.

4 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you, Mr. Gray.

5 Union County Commissioners.

6 MR. GRAY: I guess that would be me also
7 in this -- or, no, I'm sorry, not me on this one.

8 ALJ SANDOR: I think that's Mr. Boggs if
9 he's chiming in. Give you another second, Mr. Boggs.

10 MR. BOGGS: Thank you. My apologies for
11 that. Thad Boggs here for the Union County
12 Commissioners, the law firm of Frost Brown Todd,
13 Columbus, Ohio.

14 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you, Mr. Boggs.

15 Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

16 Hearing none. And also note for the
17 record that counsel for Staff is not present this
18 evening. While counsel for some of the parties are
19 not participating, there may be other representatives
20 of these parties attending.

21 The subject of today's hearing is an
22 application filed by AEUG Union Solar, LLC, for a
23 certificate to construct and operate a solar-powered
24 electric generation facility. Specifically the
25 proposed project would occupy approximately

1 2,013 acres within a 3,355 acre project area in
2 Washington and York Townships in Union County. The
3 project will generate 325 megawatts.

4 AEUG Union Solar's application was filed
5 on December 23 and December 24, 2020. On May -- then
6 on May 19, 2021, Board Staff filed a Report of
7 Investigation. This report is a recommendation from
8 the Board Staff and does not necessarily reflect what
9 the Board's final determination will be.

10 The purpose of today's public hearing is
11 to receive testimony regarding AEUG Union Solar's
12 application from entities and persons in the local
13 community who are affected by the proposed project
14 but who are not parties to this case. The public
15 hearing is not a question and answer session but is
16 an opportunity to let the Board know what you think
17 about the proposed project.

18 Today's public hearing is only one aspect
19 of this case. An evidentiary hearing is scheduled to
20 begin on July 7, 2021, via Webex. The purpose of the
21 evidentiary hearing is for the parties in this case
22 including the Applicant, any Intervenors, and Board
23 Staff to provide testimony and other evidence
24 regarding the project.

25 Tonight's hearing is being transcribed by

1 a court reporter from Armstrong & Okey. If you plan
2 to testify, please speak clearly so that the court
3 reporter can accurately reflect your comments on the
4 record. Please make sure that you verbally respond
5 to all questions asked so they can be properly
6 transcribed.

7 After I finish with this introduction, we
8 will call the individuals on the registration list to
9 testify about the proposed project. Each person who
10 registered to testify will be permitted to speak once
11 about the project.

12 If you are testifying tonight, we will
13 ask you to take an oath or affirmation that what you
14 are about to say is the truth. Your testimony will
15 then be considered as part of the official record in
16 this case, and it will be reviewed by the Board
17 before a final decision is made on the application.

18 Additionally, counsel for the parties in
19 this case as well as Judge Augustini and myself will
20 be permitted to ask you questions about your
21 testimony. Should you decide that you do not want to
22 testify when we call your name from the registration
23 list, you can pass to the next witness.

24 Also once you have finished testifying or
25 if you are here just to observe, you may leave the

1 hearing at any time that you wish.

2 If individuals wish to supplement their
3 testimony with an exhibit for the Board's
4 consideration, a copy of the document along with a
5 reference to Case No. 20-1405-EL-BGN must be provided
6 to the Board no later than June 7, 2021. The
7 document may be sent by e-mail to
8 contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov or by mail to Ohio -- Ohio
9 Power Siting Board, 180 East Broad Street, Attention
10 Docketing Division, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

11 For those of you not testifying but who
12 wish to file public comment regarding the proposed
13 project, you can do so in writing on the Board's
14 website by e-mail at contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov or by
15 mail to Ohio Power Siting Board, 180 East Broad
16 Street, Attention Docketing Division, Columbus, Ohio
17 43215. Written comments should reference Case
18 No. 20-1405-EL-BGN.

19 The Board appreciates your participation
20 in tonight's hearing, and we want everyone who is
21 registered to testify to have the opportunity to do
22 so.

23 At this time we are going to begin with
24 the testimony. And both Judge Augustini and I
25 apologize in advance if we mispronounce your name,

1 but we will be trying our level best to get it right.

2 So the first witness on our list tonight
3 is Dorsey Hager. Micah, please promote Mr. Hager to
4 a panelist role.

5 MR. SCHMIDT: This will be -- this will
6 be audio only and I have unmuted so if we could check
7 the audio and make sure our witness is there.

8 MR. HAGER: I'm here. Can you hear me?

9 MR. SCHMIDT: We can.

10 MR. HAGER: All right. There was a pause
11 there. I wasn't sure. My name is Dorsey Hager, and
12 I am the Executive Treasurer of the Columbus --

13 ALJ SANDOR: One moment, Mr. Hager. One
14 moment. I need to swear you in before you give your
15 testimony.

16 MR. HAGER: Okay.

17 ALJ SANDOR: Then I have a few questions
18 to introduce you to the record as well.

19 MR. HAGER: All right. My fault.

20 ALJ SANDOR: That's okay. Can you please
21 raise your right hand.

22 (Witness sworn.)

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

25 MR. HAGER: Dorsey Hager, D-O-R-S-E-Y

1 H-A-G-E-R.

2 ALJ SANDOR: Please provide your address
3 including the township.

4 MR. HAGER: 20590 Collins Road, that's
5 Milford Center, Ohio 43045. And my township is Allen
6 Township.

7 ALJ SANDOR: Do you reside or work within
8 the project's area?

9 MR. HAGER: I reside within the project
10 area.

11 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
12 your testimony.

13 MR. HAGER: Okay. My name is Dorsey
14 Hager, and my day job I'm the Executive
15 Secretary-Treasurer of the Columbus and Central Ohio
16 Building and Construction Trades Council where I have
17 the privilege to represent 18 building trades unions
18 in Columbus and central Ohio who have 18,000 members
19 and thousands of contractors.

20 I also, like I said, reside in Allen
21 Township, Milford Center in Union County, so I
22 understand that the economic impact and the impact of
23 the jobs that are going to be provided by this
24 project are going to create. There's going to be
25 very good, well paying building trades jobs,

1 electricians, laborers, all kinds of skilled trades,
2 people that are going to be constructing and
3 maintaining this project now and far into the future.

4 And I think it's a great opportunity for
5 this community in which I reside in to move forward
6 with this project to be able to do what it can do to
7 help the area economically by providing a lot of
8 these jobs and careers for people here and that's why
9 I'm testifying.

10 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you.

11 Are there any questions for this witness
12 from counsel or the Bench?

13 MR. SETTINERI: No, your Honor.

14 ALJ SANDOR: All right. Hearing none,
15 thank you for your testimony. You are excused and
16 have a nice evening.

17 MR. HAGER: Thank you.

18 ALJ SANDOR: Our next registered witness
19 is Steven Wise. If, Micah, if you can promote
20 Mr. Wise to a panelist role.

21 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Wise, you've been
22 promoted. If you can enable your audio and video.

23 MR. WISE: Yep. I'm here.

24 ALJ SANDOR: Hello, Mr. Wise. Please
25 raise your right hand. The video is lagging behind.

1 One moment.

2 MR. WISE: Sorry. It's raised.

3 ALJ SANDOR: It's raised? Okay.

4 (Witness sworn.)

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

7 MR. WISE: My name is Steven Wise.

8 That's S-T-E-V-E-N W-I-S-E.

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

11 MR. WISE: Address is 29000 Hoover
12 Moffitt Road, West Mansfield, Ohio 43358. My
13 township is York.

14 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Actually, Mr. Wise,
15 can you turn off your video actually. It appears
16 it's lagging behind. I think it's showing bandwidth
17 issues. And that way we can get even better audio.

18 MR. WISE: Sure. I turned it off.

19 ALJ SANDOR: Perfect. Thank you. And
20 then do you reside or work within the project area?

21 MR. WISE: I reside within the project
22 area.

23 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
24 your testimony.

25 MR. WISE: Okay. Good evening. Thank

1 you for taking the time to have my testimony. I just
2 wanted to say that I just have an opposition to the
3 project.

4 I've had numerous meetings with the
5 director of the project, and I can appreciate all the
6 information that I've been given. And basically I
7 still feel as though I just don't really want to live
8 next to large solar panel fields. The intent when I
9 purchased my property in the country was to -- part
10 of that, you know, intangible piece of that is having
11 those country views, you know, some fields and
12 woodlands nearby. So this will just majorly impact
13 the visual of my property.

14 And as part of the tangible side, my
15 concern still is the effect of property value. If we
16 were -- as a family decided to -- to leave the area
17 and that would probably only be because of this
18 project, because as I said, you know, we just don't
19 really look forward to seeing two sides of our
20 property bordered by these large panel fields. So
21 the evidence that I've seen and the -- in the
22 application there's studies that have been submitted
23 that discuss, you know, there's no -- that if the
24 project -- actually there is no impact to property
25 value. But these studies that I have seen, they --

1 the case is basically kind of maybe one border of a
2 residential area is -- is bordered by a solar field,
3 whereas, in this case we have single-family
4 residential properties that are bordered on two or
5 three sides. And, you know, even with the 100 or 200
6 foot setback, it's not a case that I've seen
7 submitted in the evidence for a study like how does
8 that impact property values.

9 So I think it's a little bit misleading
10 for them to think that there's not going to be an
11 impact to property value when they don't really have
12 any evidence to back that up. And I strongly suspect
13 that there will be an impact to property value
14 because I don't think that most people that want to
15 buy a property in the country wish to see acres and
16 acres of solar panels just across the road or just in
17 the -- just across the field from their house.

18 So I think really my main opposition, as
19 I said, is just -- just kind of the intangible and
20 that the intangible view that you can't really put a
21 value on; or if you want to say you have a property
22 value, part of that is just the seclusion that you
23 have. And I think that these property values -- my
24 property and other -- my other neighbors are going to
25 decrease as a result of this.

1 So that's -- that's really my statement
2 for this evening. Thank you.

3 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you, Mr. Wise. Are
4 there any questions for this witness from counsel or
5 the Bench?

6 Okay. Hearing none, thank you for your
7 testimony tonight. You are excused and have a good
8 evening -- have a nice evening, Mr. Wise.

9 MR. WISE: Thank you. Thank you.

10 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Our next registered
11 witness is Emily Davis-McElroy. Micah.

12 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
13 you can enable your audio and video.

14 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: Is there any lag on
15 my end?

16 ALJ SANDOR: No. You are looking good so
17 far.

18 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: Great. Wonderful.

19 ALJ SANDOR: One moment, please. Please
20 raise your right hand.

21 (Witness sworn.)

22 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Please state and
23 spell your name for the record.

24 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: So it is Emily,
25 E-M-I-L-Y, Davis, D-A-V-I-S, McElroy, M-c-E-L-R-O-Y.

1 ALJ SANDOR: Please provide your address
2 including the township.

3 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: So I currently reside
4 at 154 West Bomford in Richwood which is actually
5 considered Claibourne Township or the Village of
6 Richwood. We are building a home at 33569 Shertzer
7 Road which is Washington Township.

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

10 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: I will reside within
11 the project area once the home is completed. I grew
12 up in the project area, and I also service the area
13 in my current job.

14 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
15 your testimony.

16 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: So I guess where I
17 come on this is being born and raised here in
18 Richwood, I have a real fear of the economic impact a
19 project like this would have on my rural farm
20 community. There's a lot of things to consider when
21 you look at something like this and it's not only
22 just, you know, the fact we are going to have acreage
23 go by the wayside. There is a lot of seed dealers in
24 this area, chemical dealers, implement dealers, all
25 the way down to the guys that work on your trucks,

1 the guys that change the tire on your tractors.
2 There's just so much more economic fallout than just
3 the acres that are going by the wayside.

4 The other piece when you really look at
5 it from an economics point of view, this is a large
6 project taking up a large amount of acreage in our
7 area that are -- are crop-producing acres. Urban
8 sprawl takes care of this on its own. So to give up
9 those acres while population is still increasing is
10 terribly irresponsible on our side.

11 ALJ SANDOR: Ms. Davis, can you close
12 down just a little -- just so our court reporter can
13 get everything? Thank you. Thank you.

14 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: Okay. I'm sorry.
15 And I also have a lot of it written out, so I can
16 always send it as well.

17 So going back, my apologies. So I just
18 feel that it is very irresponsible to take this
19 acreage out for the thought of solar because at the
20 end of the day we do farm to produce food, fiber, and
21 fuels for the population.

22 The other piece with that when you think
23 about it is the -- the amount of food that we produce
24 now but also that we are going to be expected to do
25 in future years. Per the American Farm Bureau, one

1 U.S. farm feeds 166 families in the U.S. and abroad.
2 Our global population is expected to exceed
3 2.2 billion by 2050. With that growth considered,
4 farmers will actually have to produce 70 percent more
5 food than we are producing today. If we are
6 currently taking out farm grounds, you know, who --
7 who and where is this going to be produced from?

8 So then the other -- the other pieces
9 that kind of in my mind hit home aside from the
10 landscape changes, obviously the changes in wildlife,
11 the changes in maybe their migration patterns and
12 things like that, but also potential drainage issues.
13 I have personally driven up near the Hardin County
14 project recently, and it is currently a sitting
15 swamp. And then when you think of that, it's the
16 land around that that you have to consider as well.

17 So with those drainage issues, as the
18 Companies are drilling through the tile, the field
19 tile, things like that to erect the solar panels,
20 it's obviously causing that -- drainage issues.
21 Farmers are -- landowners work really hard to resolve
22 the drainage issues that are already there. And the
23 time and money spent, that's, you know, going to be
24 reversed with this project.

25 Drainage issues lead to other challenges

1 more than just sitting water. It can affect yields
2 and crop quality in those adjoining fields which
3 ultimately leads to other economic issues. When the
4 farmer makes less and produces less, they also spend
5 less, and again, going back to that statistic that we
6 are going to have to actually feed 70 percent more
7 people real soon.

8 I also don't feel personally that there
9 is enough unbiased impact studies done on land,
10 wildlife, drinking water, and just overall human
11 health to really say that this is a viable thing for
12 our area.

13 I also agree with the prior speaker that,
14 you know, we're not guaranteed that this won't show a
15 decrease in home values. I know I personally being
16 one of those crazy people that are building the house
17 post-pandemic at an all time high market would be
18 very unappreciative of a lower market in that aspect.

19 The other thing I know that they keep
20 boasting about are local jobs which honestly I think
21 that's kind of laughable. So, yes, in the short term
22 they talk about all of these jobs that are going to
23 be filled by local individuals. Well, first of all,
24 at what pay rate? Union County right now is at a
25 high with housing, and it's not affordable housing.

1 So also with that thought in mind, where do they plan
2 to house this workforce? That's a big curiosity of
3 mine. Also the fact that there is not a lot of
4 long-term jobs that will be left there.

5 With the thought in mind then too of only
6 a few full-time jobs remaining at the end of this,
7 what about the jobs that this project will destroy?
8 Again, our implement dealers, chemical and fertilizer
9 dealers and applicators, crop insurance agencies,
10 tire shops, automotive dealers, seed dealers. Again,
11 this can go on and on.

12 And then I guess my last point is
13 who's -- who's going to pay for this project if it
14 fails? Who's going to be in charge of restoring the
15 land? I know the contracts speak about restoring the
16 land. What if the projects fail before the escrows
17 are fully funded? Where does that come from?

18 And as we are talking about dollars, and
19 we are talking about cleaning up the land and the use
20 of land and all of these things. As you look at
21 this, the dollars these companies are willing to
22 spend to rent ground over 30 years is significantly
23 higher than the cost to just purchase even if they
24 offered the landowner an exorbitant amount over
25 market value. That statistic alone should talk to

1 the amount of subsidies that are used to fuel this
2 and the lack of competence and commitment potentially
3 coming from the company putting the solar farm in.
4 That speaks volumes to me from that aspect alone.

5 And then I will leave you with one last
6 statistic that I wrote in my letter to the Ohio Power
7 Siting Board on this case. And that's according to
8 the 2020 American Farmland Trust stated the state's
9 productivity, versatility, and resiliency analysis,
10 our area has a high PVR. A high PVR is an indicator
11 for high sustainability for long-term intensive crop
12 production, especially for food crops. Why at the
13 end of the day are we wanting to destroy valuable
14 farm ground that helps to feed America?

15 That's my plea to you. I invite you to
16 come spend a day in my small piece of the world.
17 Drive around town. Drive around the community. Meet
18 with the local implement dealers, seed dealers,
19 chemical salesmen, crop insurance. They are more
20 than willing to talk. I just think there is a lot
21 more impact to this than what meets the eye. And
22 it's not something that I want for my local rural
23 farm community. Thank you.

24 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you.

25 Are there any questions for this witness

1 from counsel or the Bench?

2 Okay. Hearing none, thank you for your
3 testimony this evening and have a nice evening.

4 MS. DAVIS-McELROY: Thank you.

5 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Our next registered
6 witness is Mark Jerew. If Micah -- Micah, if you
7 could please promote him to a panelist role.

8 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
9 you can enable your audio and video.

10 ALJ SANDOR: Mr. Jerew, we are just
11 waiting for you to activate your video. Can you --
12 Mr. Jerew, can you say something? I want to make
13 sure we have your audio.

14 MR. JEREW: I don't know if you can hear
15 me or not.

16 ALJ SANDOR: Yes.

17 MR. JEREW: Oh, here we go. Oops. One
18 moment.

19 ALJ SANDOR: Okay.

20 MR. JEREW: There we go.

21 ALJ SANDOR: We can see you and hear you.
22 Please raise your right hand.

23 (Witness sworn.)

24 ALJ SANDOR: Please state and spell your
25 name for the record.

1 MR. JEREW: My name is Mark Jerew,
2 M-A-R-K J-E-L-E-W.

3 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please provide your
4 address including the township.

5 MR. JEREW: My address is 31101 State
6 Route 31, Richwood, Ohio 43344.

7 ALJ SANDOR: And what township is
8 Richwood in?

9 MR. JEREW: That would be Washington
10 Township.

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

13 MR. JEREW: Currently both. I do reside,
14 and I currently work in the project area.

15 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
16 your testimony.

17 MR. JEREW: All right. First of all, I
18 want to first thank -- thank you for hosting this
19 online so the public has a chance to speak its mind
20 about the proposed project.

21 I've had an uneasy feeling about this
22 whole thing ever since I heard about the project and
23 every -- every time I think about it for that matter.
24 Basically I am trying to be the voice of the future
25 here.

1 So I would like to start by reading a
2 letter I wrote to the editor of the Marysville
3 Journal-Tribune. I apologize if my voice is shaky
4 but.

5 ALJ SANDOR: That's okay.

6 MR. JEREW: When I heard that you were
7 seeking public opinion on the solar project, I knew I
8 had to write in. As much as I am in support of
9 renewable energy sources, the placement of and use of
10 this land in this area, Union County/Washington
11 Township, I must object. My family has been in this
12 area since the '50s enjoying the rural life and
13 scenery. I have been able to enjoy that for the last
14 34 years.

15 With the introduction of these solar
16 panels and all the facilities they propose to need,
17 it seems as though the landscape and views will be
18 tarnished for the next 30 plus years. I for one do
19 not want to feel as though I live in a prison in my
20 own home with the fences and supposedly razor wire
21 that's supposed to be surrounding it.

22 I don't plan on leaving this area, and I
23 don't want to leave. We've already lost a lot of
24 good farm ground to housing, although people do
25 require a place to live. We also need land to farm

1 on since it is those fields we are ultimately able to
2 feed the world.

3 Unless -- let's not forget about the
4 displacement of nature, the deer, the birds, even the
5 return of our nation's bird, the eagle. And I took
6 this picture. I know I must not have -- but see if I
7 can get that to work. There -- if it does work,
8 there is an eagle in this picture.

9 ALJ SANDOR: Mr. -- yeah, Mr. Jerew, if
10 you don't mind describing what's in the picture and
11 if you would like -- if you would like to supplement
12 your testimony at a future date with the picture, you
13 can send it to --

14 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Matt, you are on mute.

15 MR. JEREW: It is a picture of an eagle.
16 That's just north of here on one of the project
17 proposed areas April 20, 2021, at 4:50 p.m.

18 ALJ SANDOR: And, Mr. Jerew, I'll just
19 note real quick if you would like to supplement your
20 testimony with a copy of the photo you just
21 described, you may do so after the hearing at the
22 e-mail address I mentioned earlier.

23 MR. JEREW: All right.

24 ALJ SANDOR: It will be filed along with
25 the transcript in the docket.

1 MR. JEREW: Okay. Yeah, I wasn't sure
2 about the exhibit thing.

3 But anyway, back where I was here, also
4 want to point out the recent article about the
5 potential ag business losses which is in the
6 Journal-Tribune. It says Thursday, April 29, 2021,
7 that the solar farm could generate 2.6 million.
8 However, ag businesses could lose 12.5 million a
9 year. To me that's pretty easy math but.

10 Besides that it's just in my mind I feel
11 there are better places to install panels, for
12 instance, over parking lots as sort of a mezzanine
13 question slash that's a lot and stay shaded during
14 the day. Also rooftops, tons of rooftops,
15 warehouses, unused space that, you know, could be
16 used. It could also prolong roof life. Future of
17 the region also has to be considered, not just the
18 here and now.

19 I have got some other points. The
20 foreign companies that make these panels, we have
21 enough foreign products; at least in my mind we have
22 enough already.

23 And letting the land rest, that's another
24 one I heard. To me if the land needed to rest,
25 nothing would grow there at all. That's what farmers

1 have to deal with, I'm sure.

2 And other -- and also looking at them,
3 that's not a good thing. The folks that I know that
4 have put -- put land in, they are not around them, so
5 they don't have to look at them. The people that
6 benefit these, they don't have to look at them
7 either.

8 Let's see, and where does the land loss
9 end? We keep losing farm. That puts -- farm ground.
10 That puts heavier and heavier burden on those who
11 choose to keep farming. What if there is a bad year
12 or two or three? Worse yet have to import our food
13 at that point.

14 And I say -- let's say the contract got
15 renewed. I would have to live with these for the
16 rest of my life potentially. And property values, as
17 the others have spoken about.

18 And is there any glare that comes off of
19 these? I mean, I don't really want to get blinded
20 just by looking outside.

21 And hearing about the companies who put
22 these in can just cut down any tree they want just
23 because of shading, that stuff really irks me pretty
24 well.

25 Displacing of nature is a huge thing for

1 me. But this is another picture that I may not get
2 able to work here.

3 ALJ SANDOR: Can you describe the picture
4 if you would like to talk about it.

5 MR. JEREW: It's a sunset behind our
6 house. This is why -- oh, shoot. This is why we
7 opted out of it. It won't show up. But anyway this
8 is why we opted out of it. It's a sunset picture
9 from our backyard. And when asked about it, I was --
10 they had a family meeting about it and if I was in
11 support of it. I said, "No. I want to enjoy the
12 sunsets in my backyard." I've got probably hundreds
13 of pictures of the sunset back here.

14 ALJ SANDOR: Mr. Jerew, I think you might
15 have accidentally turned your video off.

16 MR. JEREW: Okay. I'm sorry.

17 ALJ SANDOR: If you don't mind turning it
18 back on.

19 MR. JEREW: Okay. There it is, yeah.

20 ALJ SANDOR: There. We can see you.

21 MR. JEREW: So that's pretty much my
22 point. There's a lot of things that need to be
23 considered instead of just, you know, the money
24 aspect. You know, you see a lot of dollars being
25 thrown around, but other things have to be considered

1 as well.

2 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Are there any
3 questions for this witness from counsel or the Bench?

4 MR. SETTINERI: I have one. Just one
5 question, your Honor.

6 ALJ SANDOR: Yes. Go ahead.

7 MR. SETTINERI: Yeah. Good evening,
8 Mr. Jerew. This is Mike Settineri and I represent
9 the AEUG Union Solar. A quick question on the
10 picture of the eagle, did you take that picture?

11 MR. JEREW: Yes, I did.

12 MR. SETTINERI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

13 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Any other questions?

14 MR. JEREW: It was just north, the north
15 side of Treaty Line.

16 MR. SETTINERI: Okay. Thank you.

17 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Any other questions,
18 counsel or the Bench?

19 Okay. Hearing none, thank you for your
20 testimony this evening. You are excused.

21 MR. JEREW: Thank you for your time.

22 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Our next registered
23 witness is Taylor Christian. Micah, if you could
24 please promote Mr. Christian to a panelist role.

25 MR. SCHMIDT: You're been promoted. I

1 can see you.

2 MR. CHRISTIAN: All right. Can you hear
3 me?

4 ALJ SANDOR: Yes. Could you raise your
5 right hand, Mr. Christian.

6 (Witness sworn.)

7 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you. Please state and
8 spell your name for the record.

9 MR. CHRISTIAN: My name is Taylor
10 Christian. And it's T-A-Y-L-O-R, last name
11 C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N.

12 ALJ SANDOR: Please provide your address
13 including the township.

14 MR. CHRISTIAN: I live at 9499 West Calla
15 Road, Salem, Ohio 44460 and in Green Township.

16 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Do you work or reside
17 within the project area?

18 MR. CHRISTIAN: I do not reside there.
19 My job does service it though.

20 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
21 your testimony.

22 MR. CHRISTIAN: All right. Good evening
23 to the members of the Ohio Power Siting Board. My
24 name is Taylor Christian. I am the Field Operations
25 Director for the Ohio Land & Liberty Coalition. The

1 Land & Liberty Coalition is a project of the Ohio
2 Conservative Energy Forum, also known as OSEF. OSEF
3 focuses primarily on state level policies while the
4 Land & Liberty Coalition engages on local energy
5 issues across the State of Ohio.

6 As an Ohioan myself, I encourage you to
7 approve Union Solar. This project has a number of
8 benefits that include --

9 ALJ SANDOR: Mr. Christian, one moment.
10 Can you please slow down just a little bit so the
11 court reporter can get everything you are saying.

12 MR. CHRISTIAN: Yeah, absolutely. Do you
13 need me to go back at any point?

14 ALJ SANDOR: No. Go ahead.

15 MR. CHRISTIAN: So this project has a
16 number of benefits that include increased resilience
17 for Ohio farmers, more energy independence for our
18 state, and additional economic development here at
19 home.

20 Farmers in Ohio and across the country
21 must navigate shifting commodity prices and varying
22 crop yields. Renewable energy projects like Union
23 Solar come with leaseholder payments for the
24 landowners, many of whom are farmers. The millions
25 paid to leaseholders will provide a long-term fixed

1 income that can provide a buffer against the
2 challenges the farmers face day in and day out. This
3 fixed income can help secure loans as well.
4 Potential lenders wants to ensure that their loan
5 will be repaid, so seeing this long-term steady cash
6 flow can provide reassurance to lenders allowing
7 farmers to further invest in and improve their
8 operations. In some cases leaseholder payments can
9 help farmers retain control of their farms.

10 The money from harvesting sunlight on a
11 portion of the property allows the farm to make a
12 steady profit while the rest of the land can be used
13 to grow crops. Yes, some of the land will
14 temporarily be taken out of agricultural production.
15 The alternative selling this land to be turned into
16 housing or, you know, other nonagricultural uses such
17 as strip malls like we've seen in a lot of -- the
18 southern portion of Union County. That would
19 permanently remove this land from agricultural
20 production. Union Solar will overall help to retain
21 farmland in the long term.

22 Farmers aren't the only beneficiary of
23 solar projects either. Our state as a whole will
24 benefit by approving this project and others like it.
25 Ohio can diversify its energy portfolio. We can even

1 flip our status as net -- from net energy importers
2 to net energy exporters. The more energy we produce
3 right here the better we can navigate future energy
4 challenges that may occur. With more energy produced
5 in Ohio from a plethora of sources, we can better be
6 insulated from fluctuations in both price and -- and
7 availability.

8 Finally, Union Solar and renewable
9 projects like it will increase economic development
10 here. They do this in a number of ways. I know the
11 first testifier already spoke on jobs, so I won't hit
12 that too hard, but I would like to emphasize it does
13 create jobs, both hundreds during construction and
14 several full-time -- full-term for the full life of
15 the project.

16 And if that's not enough, Union Solar
17 stands to provide more than \$42 million in revenue
18 for North Union Local School District over the life
19 of the project without requiring additional spending.
20 The project will provide nearly \$13 million in
21 revenue to Union County also without requiring
22 additional spending, and it will provide nearly
23 \$4 million to be split between Washington and York
24 Township, again without requiring any additional
25 infrastructure spending from local governments.

1 It's also important to note how vital
2 renewal energy development is to attracting
3 businesses. Companies like Google, Facebook, AT&T,
4 and many others want renewable energy. When looking
5 to open new facilities and thereby create jobs, they
6 are going to be attracted to areas that can provide
7 it to them. The more that we generate here, the
8 better our chances of are attracting business
9 development not just in Union County but in the
10 surrounding counties as well. If Ohio doesn't take
11 the lead in renewable energy development, we could be
12 losing out on a lot of opportunities for our workers
13 across the state.

14 In some records you approve of using
15 solar, along with benefits for doing so, increased
16 resilience for Ohio farmers, increased energy depends
17 for -- energy independence for our state, and
18 additional economic development right here at home.

19 Thank you for your time and I am happy to
20 entertain any questions that you or the Bench or the
21 counsel may have.

22 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 Are there any questions for this witness
25 from counsel or the Bench?

1 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I just had one question
2 for you, Mr. Christian.

3 MR. CHRISTIAN: Yes.

4 ALJ AUGOSTINI: In your personal
5 professional capacity, are you servicing Union County
6 or the project area?

7 MR. CHRISTIAN: Yes. So we -- we go into
8 Union County and talk to people about this.

9 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. CHRISTIAN: Yep.

11 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Thank you. Thank you
12 for your testimony this evening. You are excused.

13 Okay. Our next registered witness is
14 Stephanie Ross. Micah, please promote Ms. Ross to a
15 panelist role.

16 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
17 you can enable your audio and video.

18 ALJ SANDOR: Ms. Ross, please raise your
19 right hand.

20 (Witness sworn.)

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

23 MS. ROSS: My name is Stephanie Ross, and
24 my name is spelled S-T-E-P-H-A-N-I-E. My last name
25 is spelled R-O-S-S.

1 ALJ SANDOR: Please provide your address
2 including the township.

3 MS. ROSS: My address is 32342 State
4 Route 31, West Mansfield, Ohio 43358, Washington
5 Township.

6 ALJ SANDOR: Do you work or reside within
7 the project area?

8 MS. ROSS: I reside within the project
9 area.

10 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
11 your testimony.

12 MS. ROSS: Okay. Give me just one moment
13 here.

14 ALJ SANDOR: Sure.

15 MS. ROSS: Toggling screens. Okay. I am
16 opposed to this historically large solar facility
17 that is not environmentally compatible to this area
18 and does not fulfill a public need. I would like to
19 start by piggybacking off of two -- two comments I
20 had heard made by previous testimony, opposition
21 testimony.

22 One being jobs. You know, there's
23 this -- there's a thought here that all these jobs
24 are going to be created by this project. And I would
25 petition the Ohio Power Siting Board to please ask

1 Acciona who it is they have hired to construct the
2 project, where it is that they are actually located,
3 and how many workers they intend to bring in.

4 I think that the more the Board digs
5 deeper into this will find the number of jobs we cite
6 in Ohio, mostly Ohio jobs, jobs for Ohio residents
7 may be less than what the Board is aware. And I
8 would also like to say that my understanding is that
9 only 11 jobs will be long term, so even if we bring
10 in hundreds of jobs over a couple year time frame,
11 then the long term is only 11 jobs. So we are
12 willing to sacrifice 3,600 acres of land for 11 jobs
13 in our community.

14 And where we could create more jobs, less
15 of an environmental impact, have a less of an impact
16 to impacted residents, and with let's just say a 10
17 acre factory that we could put solar panels on top of
18 that. So this -- this idea that we are best serving
19 Ohio with providing all these jobs, this does not
20 outweigh what we are sacrificing, does not outweigh
21 the reward here.

22 The second thing I would like to support
23 is property values. You know, Steve had mentioned,
24 Mr. Wise mentioned property values. In the public
25 meeting we had with Acciona that was recorded but I

1 believe was not shared with the Board and I believe
2 was not posted to the Union Solar website back in
3 December, which would have been the second public
4 meeting, it was addressed that, you know, essentially
5 the data that has been informed by Union Solar to
6 support the no impact to property values could
7 essentially be thrown out because this project is
8 historical in size and historical in the number of
9 people and residents impacted by the project located
10 in close proximity.

11 It's never been done before. There is
12 nothing comparable to it. So all we can base it off
13 of is what we are actually able to tangibly see. So
14 what we are able to tangibly see is what I had
15 mentioned in that meeting and had recorded and I will
16 encourage all of you to look at, as well as it is
17 public information, is you can do a basic search on
18 Realtor.com or Zillow and look at home values, what
19 homes are selling for a year ago. And you can start
20 looking I would say in October of 2020 because that's
21 when it started becoming more public knowledge that
22 the Company was actually here, and they are going to
23 construct because prior to October most residents did
24 not know that this even existed or was even a thing.
25 We had no idea that this started in 2019.

1 So if you look at home values starting in
2 October 2020 to today in this area, if you take the
3 North Union School District, look at homes that
4 Acciona has identified in their appendices of 193
5 homes. Let's say within that appendix that are
6 within a half a mile of the project. Look at those
7 homes that have went up for sale and see if they have
8 went for -- how long they sat on the market and what
9 they ended up selling for.

10 Anybody who's aware of what the real
11 estate market is in Ohio right now, especially in
12 Union County, homes are not selling for under market
13 value. And they are not sitting on the market for
14 very long. Homes since October 2020 in a basic
15 public search anybody is able to do in this area, you
16 will start seeing that they are sitting on the market
17 longer if they're identified within this project area
18 or they are selling for under market value. This is
19 what we know. This is what is truth and this is what
20 we have to go by.

21 I'll get into my point more. I just
22 wanted to support those two points. And I apologize.
23 I am looking over at my other screen.

24 ALJ SANDOR: That's all right. Go ahead.

25 MS. ROSS: From my front doorstep to the

1 nearest solar panel is 1,400 feet. My husband and I
2 own 5 acres just a few hundred feet from our property
3 line where my young children ride four-wheelers and
4 play will be a construction entrance for the project
5 that later turns into a permanent entrance for the
6 solar facility.

7 Union Solar projects surround my home
8 from three sides. I am luckier than some of my
9 neighbors that there is a field dividing my home and
10 the project on two sides. However, all three points
11 of my home that is surrounded will have visibility of
12 the project, especially if Acciona is continued to be
13 allowed to deforest the 37 acres of land that at this
14 moment that makes up some points of natural screening
15 that we do have surrounding our home.

16 I provided several written testimonies
17 over the past few months that is available for the
18 Board to review, therefore, I would utilize this
19 testimony to share some new points in my opposition.
20 I will start pointing out the obvious flaw in the
21 Ohio Power Siting Board system that is performing an
22 investigation of writing off a Stipulation for a
23 Company's project prior to public hearing. I'm
24 referencing the case documented -- document uploaded
25 to the record on 5-19 of the Staff record of

1 investigation -- or Staff Report of Investigation. I
2 know myself and others like me feel unheard or
3 questioning what difference our voice also makes in a
4 public hearing at this point considering the
5 investigation has been determined complete.

6 Yet I am still here today in front of you
7 clinging to every last bit of hope because I'm a
8 mother of three small children. And myself, my
9 family, and my neighbors, and their families are
10 being used as experiments without our consent. Due
11 to the historical nature of this project and size and
12 close proximity to the large number of homes ever
13 impacted by a solar facility, my family's safety and
14 well-being is something I will never be willing to
15 leave to chance. Considering vast unknowns and
16 horrible truths, my family's well-being is not to be
17 gambled.

18 Moving on I would like to address the
19 drainage contamination as one of the many concerns
20 regarding this project, if not the biggest concern.
21 This area historically always has serious drainage
22 issues that will only turn more severe if Acciona's
23 building methods are not better regulated and
24 inspected to ensure the safety and well-being of
25 connecting landowners during construction and

1 residual effects for years to come.

2 Please refer to uploaded case document
3 Appendix U Field Tile Study uploaded on 12-23 for the
4 case record. It is made very clear by this appendix
5 has no clue as to whether the majority of the drain
6 tile lays in the project areas, as well as how these
7 drain tiles run into connecting nonparticipating
8 landowners' properties.

9 Acciona states it will repair any
10 drainage tile identified to be damaged during the
11 construction project. However, you cannot repair
12 what you are unable to see. If you are power driving
13 111,000 poles into the ground with no clue where the
14 majority of the drainage tile is located, then you
15 will not be able to see what is being damaged below
16 the ground. The damaging effect of this form of
17 negligent building will be felt for years to come.
18 At that time the project will be completed and the
19 damage will be irreversible.

20 If the Board continues to allow Acciona
21 to move forward with this project and maintain the
22 sheer method of power driving without augering to at
23 least 4-1/2 feet first and east as needed pole
24 location as that ground can be visible to see the
25 tile location, then the Board is making way for us

1 only to be in violation of Section 3767.13,
2 prohibitive acts of the Ohio Revised Code, such
3 tile -- 37 false safety and morals, Chapter 3767
4 nuisances. It could also be argued the Board's
5 simply approving a solar facility of this historical
6 size and close proximity to the largest number of
7 homes ever impacted by a solar facility that Acciona
8 at the moment of breaking ground will be in violation
9 of the referenced code. I'll argue it, I'll stand by
10 it because situations like this is why this code --
11 why this Ohio Revised Code exists is to protect the
12 public.

13 I would like to point out and petition
14 the Board to take better consideration for the human
15 beings impacted by this project. In reference to the
16 Staff Report of Investigation an environmentalist
17 will be on site during construction of the project at
18 the time Acciona will be deforesting working in close
19 proximity of woodlands and water sources to ensure
20 the safety and well-being of wildlife. Yet as
21 nonparticipating landowners are crying for on-site
22 inspectors and better constructing practices as it
23 pertains to water and soil management, we are met
24 with silence or disregard. There needs to be some
25 form of accountability and maintain construction best

1 practices that could possibly minimize the threat
2 that Acciona current form of constructing will have
3 on our local environment and connecting
4 nonparticipating land properties -- landowners and
5 properties.

6 In closing I stand before you today, and
7 I know that I have tried my absolute best to advocate
8 for my home, my family's safety and well-being, my
9 neighborhood, and my community. I stand by the fact
10 this project is only in the best interest of Acciona
11 and participating landowners. I tried to be
12 reasonable and responsible and not naive and fight
13 this project from both sides, standing in opposition
14 as well as trying to be sure that this project is --
15 if it is approved, it is constructed in a way that
16 has minimal impact to the environment and
17 nonparticipating landowners.

18 As a community, we formed a list of
19 resident requests to Acciona and not a single request
20 has been verified that it will give in. Acciona has
21 made it very clear they will not be participating in
22 neighborhood agreements. Yet just a quarter of a
23 mile from this project another project stands to be
24 built that will produce less megawatts and originally
25 utilize the same amount of land as Acciona. They

1 have worked with neighbors, met some of the
2 residents' requests, albeit, providing neighbor
3 agreements. That is the difference between a company
4 who understands their impact to nonparticipating
5 landowners and the proposed company who has proven to
6 not care.

7 So Ohio Power Siting Board the fate of
8 our community is in your hands. Please do not allow
9 the lack of regulation surrounding industrial solar
10 in Ohio to take advantage and destroy our community.
11 Stand for what is right. Stand for what is in the
12 better interest of the majority. Until further --
13 until further regulation can be constructed. Thank
14 you.

15 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you, Ms. Ross.

16 Are there any questions from counsel or
17 the Bench this evening?

18 Okay. Thank you very much for your
19 testimony, Ms. Ross. You are excused and please have
20 a nice rest of your evening.

21 MS. ROSS: Thank you.

22 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. The next registered
23 witness is Matthew Smith. Micah, if you could please
24 promote Mr. Smith to a panelist's role.

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

1 promoted. If you can enable your audio and video.

2 MR. SMITH: Hello.

3 ALJ SANDOR: Mr. Smith.

4 MR. SMITH: Can you hear me?

5 ALJ SANDOR: Yes, I can hear you. Please
6 raise your right hand.

7 (Witness sworn.)

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

10 MR. SMITH: Matthew Smith, M-A-T-T-H-E-W
11 S-M-I-T-H.

12 ALJ SANDOR: Please provide your address
13 including the township.

14 MR. SMITH: 15787 Paver, P-A-V-E-R,
15 Barnes, B-A-R-N-E-S, Road, and that is Marysville,
16 Ohio 43040 and in Allen Township.

17 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Do you work or reside
18 within the project area?

19 MR. SMITH: I do not.

20 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
21 your testimony.

22 MR. SMITH: Sure. I am a participating
23 landowner in the project. I own 47 acres along
24 Treaty Line Road in York Township. I've owned this
25 land for approximately 12 years now. And during that

1 time and prior to that, I owned the land jointly with
2 my ex-spouse. But the land has been in farm
3 production rotated between corn and beans every year.
4 A tenant farmer that takes care of the land has often
5 commented that the land is not very productive. It
6 has been tilled and tilled and tilled, and I am
7 looking at this opportunity with Acciona to allow the
8 land to lay fallow for a period of time to restore
9 the land and then potentially use the funds raised
10 from the rental income to put tile into the land to
11 restore it back to farm ground some day because
12 current crop -- current rents for this ground will
13 almost -- they are bismal and with taxes increasing,
14 it's becoming to a point where owning the land is --
15 is not really doing anything economically for myself.

16 I've offered to sell this land numerous
17 occasions and had it listed through the Multiple
18 Listing System numerous times with no interest from
19 resident farmers in the area who are looking to
20 expand their farms. I even had prices as low as
21 \$4,000 per acre. So as the yields continue to drop
22 on the ground, partially due to poor drainage, I know
23 Ms. Ross just mentioned about tiling and that Acciona
24 doesn't know where the tile is on the land, nor do I,
25 the land was -- the tiles that exist in most of these

1 farming areas are clay tile that had been installed
2 over 100 years ago. And no one really knows exactly
3 where any of it is, whether it's functioning or not,
4 and it's rather evident on the 47 acres I own that it
5 is not functioning. Like I said, the crop yields
6 just bear that out relative to those farmers who have
7 invested considerable money in -- in putting in the
8 black corrugated tile in their farms.

9 So apart from that, I also look forward
10 to the other economic impacts that Acciona will bring
11 to the community by creating some jobs. I know
12 there's a dispute over how many of those will be long
13 lasting, but any kind of shot in the arm for the
14 community economically is always welcome. And I
15 don't know that I've got any other information beyond
16 that as far as the economic impacts for the area
17 apart from the large donation that was just made to
18 the Richwood County Fair.

19 ALJ SANDOR: Does that conclude your
20 testimony?

21 MR. SMITH: That does.

22 ALJ SANDOR: Perfect. Any questions from
23 this witness from counsel or the Bench?

24 Okay. Hearing none, thank you for your
25 testimony and have a nice evening. You're excused.

1 MR. SMITH: You too. Thank you.

2 ALJ SANDOR: Our next registered witness
3 is Patrick Hook. Micah, if you could please promote
4 Mr. Hook to a panelist role.

5 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Hook, you've been
6 promoted. If you can enable your audio and video.

7 MR. HOOK: Hello.

8 ALJ SANDOR: Hello, Mr. Hook. Please
9 raise your hand.

10 (Witness sworn.)

11 ALJ SANDOR: Please state and spell your
12 name for the record.

13 MR. HOOK: Patrick Hook, P-A-T-R-I-C-K
14 H-O-O-K.

15 ALJ SANDOR: Please provide your address
16 including the township.

17 MR. HOOK: 1502 Glenn Avenue, Columbus,
18 Ohio 43212.

19 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Township you reside
20 in?

21 MR. HOOK: Franklin Township, Franklin
22 County.

23 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. And do you work or
24 reside in the project area?

25 MR. HOOK: I do not live, but I cover

1 jurisdiction in that area.

2 ALJ SANDOR: And in what manner?

3 MR. HOOK: I'm the Business Manager of
4 the Electrical Workers Union and that's a
5 jurisdiction that I cover.

6 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Please proceed with
7 your testimony.

8 MR. HOOK: Good evening. My name is
9 Patrick Hook. I'm the Business Manager and long-time
10 member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical
11 Workers Local 683.

12 Over my years of employment I have worked
13 many places in and around Union County. I have
14 watched the transition from coal generation to
15 generation with lower or no carbon emissions such as
16 solar. Rural areas of vast farmland are particularly
17 well suited to be a great area for this project. I
18 speak in complete support of the jobs that Union
19 Solar project will provide.

20 The hundreds of direct jobs will have a
21 lasting impact in this area. I know that the IBEW
22 stands ready to provide the workers necessary to
23 complete this project in a safe and timely manner.

24 It's also our intention that, if given
25 the opportunity, these jobs will become lifelong

1 careers in the electrical industry, good pay, steady
2 jobs with benefits, jobs that this entire area is in
3 need of.

4 Thank you for your time this evening. I
5 look forward to working with Union Solar project and
6 Ohio Power Siting Board providing any information I
7 could to ensure this project moves forward. Thank
8 you.

9 ALJ SANDOR: Thank you.

10 Are there any questions for this witness
11 from counsel or the Bench?

12 Okay. Hearing none, thank you for your
13 testimony. You are excused and have a nice evening.

14 MR. HOOK: Thank you. You too.

15 ALJ SANDOR: Okay. Judge Augostini.

16 ALJ AUGOSTINI: All right. It looks like
17 our next registered witness is Mr. Todd Davidson.
18 Micah, could you please promote Mr. Davidson to a
19 panelist.

20 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
21 you could enable your audio and video.

22 MR. DAVIDSON: Can you see me now?

23 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can hear you, but I
24 can't see you. If you want, we can just proceed with
25 an -- oh, I can see you now.

1 MR. DAVIDSON: Okay.

2 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. I am going to
3 swear you in. Can you please raise your right hand.

4 (Witness sworn.)

5 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. Can you
6 please state and spell your name for the record.

7 MR. DAVIDSON: Todd Davidson, T-O-D-D,
8 D-A-V-I-D-S-O-N.

9 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. And can you please
10 state your address for the record including your
11 township.

12 MR. DAVIDSON: 1038 Nutmeg Drive,
13 Marysville, Ohio 43040, Paris Township.

14 ALJ AUGOSTINI: And do you reside or work
15 within the project area?

16 MR. DAVIDSON: No, I do not.

17 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. You may proceed
18 with your testimony.

19 MR. DAVIDSON: All right. Thank you for
20 the opportunity to participate tonight virtually.
21 I've lived in Union County for 19 years. I am a
22 member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical
23 Workers Local 683.

24 I'm speaking tonight in support of this
25 solar project. It's estimated we will get about 450

1 plus jobs. Now, the term jobs has been thrown around
2 a lot, but I would like to think of these jobs as
3 careers for many of my brothers and sisters in the
4 union in Ohio and other trades such as myself have
5 made careers from this. I've been able to provide my
6 family a decent life because of these jobs.

7 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Mr. Davidson, would you
8 mind turning off your camera? It looks like we are
9 having some bandwidth issues.

10 MR. DAVIDSON: That was all I had to say
11 anyway.

12 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Well, then you
13 made it easy then.

14 Are there any questions from counsel or
15 the Bench for this witness?

16 All right. Well, hearing none,
17 Mr. Davidson, you are excused. Thank you for your
18 testimony and have a good evening.

19 MR. DAVIDSON: Thank you for your time.

20 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you.

21 Our next witness is Tenah McMahan.

22 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
23 you can enable your audio and video.

24 MS. McMAHAN: All right. Can you hear
25 me?

1 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can hear you.

2 MS. McMAHAN: I don't have a camera
3 beside mine to put a camera on.

4 ALJ AUGOSTINI: That's okay. No worries.
5 We can take an audio testimony.

6 MS. McMAHAN: Okay. Thank you.

7 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I'll ask you though to
8 please raise your right hand.

9 (Witness sworn.)

10 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Can you please
11 state and spell your name for the record.

12 MS. McMAHAN: Yes. Tenah McMahan,
13 T-E-N-A-H M-C-M-A-H-A-N.

14 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. And can you please
15 state your address including the township for the
16 record. And I am going to ask you to speak up just a
17 little bit.

18 MS. McMAHAN: Sure. 27480 State Route
19 31, Raymond, Ohio 43067. York Township is my
20 residence.

21 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. And do you
22 preside -- I'm sorry. Do you work or reside in the
23 project area?

24 MS. McMAHAN: Yes, both.

25 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Thank you. Please

1 proceed with your testimony.

2 MS. McMAHAN: Thank you for listening to
3 all of this, Ohio Power Siting Board.

4 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Can you speak up just a
5 little louder, please.

6 MS. McMAHAN: Sure. Good evening. Thank
7 you so much, Ohio Power Siting Board. It's been a
8 lot to listen to this evening. Range of emotions
9 here.

10 My husband and I have owned the land that
11 we have signed on, contracted with Acciona with for
12 nearly 30 years. It's approximately 105 acres, and
13 it is in York Township two-thirds and one-third of it
14 is actually in Washington Township, so we are in both
15 townships.

16 We obviously are in favor of this because
17 in looking at it we felt that after surviving some
18 rough years farming, this would enable us as a
19 landowner a steady income and give Acciona an
20 opportunity to harvest solar from our farm. Our 7th
21 gen farmer son is involved with us.

22 And people speak of jobs for this. This
23 will help us keep him here farming to continue this,
24 you know, for the next generation. So there's a
25 different way to look at jobs in our viewpoint. It

1 enables us to participate in climate smart technology
2 and regenerative agriculture.

3 In hearing some of the other people, part
4 of this is that land had been farmed for centuries.
5 And it needs to sit and just rest, and I think it's a
6 great thing they've agreed to plant low growing grass
7 on it and maintain it so that can hold in the topsoil
8 and let it just kind of take it easy for a while.

9 We had purchased a little piece that had
10 not had anything on it for a number of years and just
11 last year we tilled it up and put a sweet corn patch.
12 That was the best soil and sweet corn patch ever. So
13 it does matter if your farmland can just sit and take
14 a break.

15 Renewable energy will be a part of the
16 future, and we feel as farmers we have to be
17 progressive minded and to move with the future. You
18 know, there was -- Ms. Ross spoke of issues with
19 things and concerns with it. We used to live on 47
20 and there is power towers. They go through our land.
21 In the '70s, my husband remembers his grandparents
22 working with the utility company, electric company,
23 to put up those towers. And, you know, when you walk
24 down to the mailbox, the hair on your arm would raise
25 up. And it is not the most healthy thing to walk

1 under these big electric towers. So there's all
2 kinds of hazards out there.

3 When the neighbors would haul the egg
4 manure from New Day which used to be Daily Egg Farm,
5 it reeked, and I felt like that was not healthy for
6 my family. We're still all here. So there is always
7 questions and concerns on things. But you just kind
8 of have to deal with sort of some of that thing.

9 The economic activity that is being
10 brought out with this project really raises questions
11 for us because I understand that Commissioner Steve
12 Robinson brought in this big 12 plus million dollar
13 deficit that would result from -- in our county from
14 this. What is those numbers really based on? Do we
15 really know where he came up with that information?
16 I mean, how do you really even know that's legit?
17 Where is he coming up with that? I don't really know
18 where his numbers are coming from.

19 And again, Acciona is going to be buying
20 seed. They are going to be buying equipment to mow.
21 They're responsible for trimming, and our property
22 has -- you know, kind of has a creek area and a lot
23 of wooded area, so they are going to have to maintain
24 that so it's not like there's none of this equipment
25 and seed going to be purchased and probably also have

1 to buy some chemicals to keep control of things too.
2 So some of that is just to me bogus.

3 The other thing that keeps coming up is
4 this whole issue on tile. And we have the same
5 situation as Matthew has where some of this farm we
6 know where the tile is, and we can -- we told them
7 and we could show them. And some of it we aren't
8 quite sure of because, again, it's been around for a
9 long time.

10 So and that was the first question they
11 had for us. Where's the tile? We don't want to harm
12 the tile. Because if they harm the tile, they know
13 they have to repair the tile. So this whole issue
14 with tile I'm just really tired of listening to
15 because I feel like they have done a great deal with
16 trying to be preventative of breaking tile, harming
17 the land, and everything to go with that.

18 I guess that's most of what I have so be
19 glad to take any questions being a landowner in this.

20 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you, Ms. McMahan,
21 for your testimony.

22 Are there any questions from counsel or
23 the Bench?

24 All right. It looks like you are free to
25 go. Thank you again for your testimony. And it

1 looks like our next witness is Mr. Alan Baker.

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

4 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can see you, Mr. Baker.

5 MR. BAKER: Can you hear me?

6 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Yes. Please raise your
7 right hand.

8 (Witness sworn.)

9 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. Can you
10 please state and spell your name for the record.

11 MR. BAKER: Sure. My name is Alan Baker,
12 spelled A-L-A-N, last name is spelled B-A-K-E-R.

13 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. And can you
14 please state your address including the township for
15 the record.

16 MR. BAKER: Sure. 6748 Willow Grove
17 Place East, Dublin, Ohio 43017. I am in Washington
18 Township of Franklin County.

19 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Thank you. Do you
20 preside -- I keep saying preside. Do you reside or
21 work within the project area?

22 MR. BAKER: No, I do not.

23 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. You may
24 proceed with your testimony, Mr. Baker.

25 MR. BAKER: Thank you. Thank you for the

1 opportunity to speak tonight too. I'm trustee for
2 the Baker Family Trust who actually owns 228 acres
3 that's committed to this project. And like Mr. Smith
4 and Ms. McMahan, you know, as a landowner, soil
5 erosion, drain tiles, those are real problems farmers
6 have faced for years and my situation too is a little
7 different that I'm trustee for the trust that takes
8 care of my mom who managed this farm for many years
9 with the help of good neighbors.

10 And I was really faced with some tough
11 decisions because she requires a very high level of
12 care for memory that's very expensive, and I was
13 facing tough -- some tough decisions about whether to
14 sell this property before I became involved in this
15 with Acciona.

16 You know, there is light. It does
17 provide a lot more capital than farming has so that I
18 can care for my mother and not sell the farm, so I do
19 have a vested interest. I didn't enter this -- this
20 agreement lightly. I have done a lot of due
21 diligence on Acciona and the partners involved before
22 I signed the contract. Also done a little
23 investigation of solar farming and went to a couple
24 seminars as well.

25 To me it's a very clean source of energy.

1 It's our future. It's apparent the big automakers
2 are moving more toward electric vehicles. And I
3 think we've got to be progressive and move too. You
4 know, the land is -- people mentioned before the land
5 has been in use for years. It's tired. Soil erosion
6 is real. Drain tiles are not mapped. It's a
7 guessing game where they are. Most like Tenah --
8 Tenah's comments, Acciona has been very diligent in
9 trying to determine where those tiles are so that
10 they don't damage them.

11 So I am a big proponent of this project.
12 I understand their concerns; but, you know, the
13 farmland has produced food for years and to get into
14 a use that's more productive for it long term makes a
15 lot of sense to me and also the fact that it's
16 producing clean energy. I mean, that's a big plus
17 for me so I'm a big proponent of this project. It is
18 going to bring additional jobs during construction
19 and maintenance. It's going to bring additional tax
20 dollars to the loss of U.S. -- CAUV status for the
21 property bills for the county.

22 And for these reasons, I'm a big
23 proponent of this -- this project. Thank you.

24 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you, Mr. Baker.

25 Are there any questions from counsel or

1 the Bench?

2 All right. I don't have any questions
3 for you, so you are off the hook. Thank you again
4 for your testimony.

5 MR. BAKER: Yep. Thank you, ma'am.

6 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. And it looks
7 like our next witness, Jeraldine Gray-Creviston, is
8 on audio.

9 MS. KOCHER: Your Honor, this is Jill
10 Kocher and I do have Jeraldine Gray-Creviston on the
11 phone as a telephone witness. Thank you.

12 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you very much,
13 Jill.

14 MS. KOCHER: Jeraldine.

15 MS. GRAY-CREVISTON: Yes.

16 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Hi there, Jeraldine. Can
17 you please raise your right hand.

18 (Witness sworn.)

19 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Can you please
20 state and spell your name for the record.

21 MS. GRAY-CREVISTON: Jeraldine,
22 G-E-R-A-L-D-I-N-E, Gray, G-R-A-Y, hyphen Creviston,
23 C-R-E-V-I-S-T-O-N.

24 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. And can you
25 please state your address including the township for

1 the record.

2 MS. GRAY-CREVISTON: 32200 State Route
3 31, West Mansfield, Ohio, Washington Township.

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

6 MS. GRAY-CREVISTON: Yes, I do.

7 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. You may
8 proceed with your testimony.

9 MS. GRAY-CREVISTON: Good evening,
10 everyone. Thank you so much for this opportunity.
11 And I have a few things that's really been bothering
12 me. Everyone is concerned about new homes or -- but
13 did they ever think new homes and the restaurants and
14 the shopping centers, they are taking the farm
15 ground, and it will never go back to a farm ground no
16 matter how many years, and yet they are all excited
17 about a new restaurant and things coming in.

18 And then they think about how to dispose
19 these, and I am sure in 30 years they will have a
20 better way to dispose them than what they are
21 thinking of now. And also solar panels do not put
22 off any pollution so those with allergies won't have
23 to worry about that. And also solar panels won't
24 need chicken manure so that will cut down on flies.

25 Wildlife adapts very well, so we don't

1 have to worry about the wildlife. And, yes, I like
2 to look out and watch the wildlife. I watch the
3 deer. And I'm sure they will still be back here
4 around my property.

5 And also they are talking about me being
6 greedy. But my opinion is I don't try to tell my
7 neighbors or the community what they can do in their
8 yard and what they can do to their house, and so I
9 feel kind of offended that everybody is trying to
10 tell me what to do with my farm ground. I am trying
11 to keep it in the family name like my mom and dad
12 wanted and so that I think they need to look at that
13 also.

14 Okay. And we will always have farmers.
15 You think there is going to be less farm ground, but
16 the farmers are producing much more than they did
17 several years ago. So I'm sure we are not going to
18 run out of food if we keep it here in our states.

19 And I guess that's about all other than I
20 am for the solar panels, and I can't see that they
21 are going to harm anybody. And more jobs will be
22 made available and more revenue for our county, so I
23 thank Acciona for asking me to participate. Thank
24 you.

25 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you, Jeraldine.

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

3 All right. You are free to go. Thank
4 you again for your testimony. Enjoy the rest of your
5 evening.

6 MS. GRAY-CREVISTON: I forgot too the
7 property values may go down. Well, I know for a fact
8 the property values haven't went down here close to
9 me so thank you.

10 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you very much.

11 MS. GRAY-CREVISTON: Thank you. Bye-bye.

12 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Bye. Okay. Our next
13 witness is Steven Goodwin.

14 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
15 you can enable your audio and video.

16 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Mr. Goodwin, could you
17 try unmuting yourself.

18 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Goodwin, I see that
19 you're unmuted and then muted again, so I am going to
20 unmute you; then we will see if that worked.

21 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you, Micah. Could
22 you say something for us, Mr. Goodwin?

23 MR. GOODWIN: I'm talking now. My screen
24 says I'm muted.

25 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can just barely hear

1 you. I can't make out any words, but if you could
2 speak up.

3 MR. GOODWIN: My name is Steve --

4 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I still can't hear you
5 very well.

6 MR. GOODWIN: On the audio?

7 ALJ AUGOSTINI: On the audio I can't hear
8 you very well.

9 MR. GOODWIN: Call in on -- try to call
10 in on the telephone.

11 MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Goodwin, if you will
12 hold tight for one second, we will have somebody call
13 you.

14 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you, Micah. Let's
15 go off the record. Off just briefly.

16 (Discussion off the record.)

17 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Mr. Goodwin, can you hear
18 me? Okay. Can you please --

19 MR. GOODWIN: Can you hear me?

20 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can hear you. Can you
21 raise your right hand.

22 (Witness sworn.)

23 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. Can you
24 please state and spell your name for the record.

25 MR. GOODWIN: My name is Steven Goodwin,

1 S-T-E-V-E-N G-O-O-D-W-I-N.

2 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. And can you
3 please state your address including the township for
4 the record.

5 MR. GOODWIN: My address is 30031 Phelps,
6 P-H-E-L-P-S, Road, West Mansfield, Ohio, York
7 Township, Union County.

8 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. And do you
9 reside or work within the project area?

10 MR. GOODWIN: Yes, both.

11 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. Mr. Goodwin,
12 you can proceed with your testimony.

13 MR. GOODWIN: Thank you. Good evening.
14 My name is Steven Goodwin. I am representing myself
15 and my wife as the property owner within the area of
16 the solar panels and my family farm corporation, the
17 shareholders of it, known as Don Goodwin & Sons,
18 Incorporated. This corporation was started in 1983
19 when we were incorporated in the State of Ohio. Our
20 family farm started in 1854, and our operation
21 includes farm ground that has been in the family for
22 the past 167 years.

23 We have always been able to manage this
24 farm without input from our surrounding neighbors
25 until now. We have persevered through some financial

1 challenges through the years and have been able to
2 continue farming through centuries.

3 The current shareholders of the
4 corporation have decided that it is in our best
5 interest to lease a portion of our land, 350 acres of
6 what we own, plus another leaseholder has leased
7 220 acres that we have been farming. We've decided
8 to lease that in support of the solar farm project,
9 AEUG Union Solar. We feel that it's important for
10 individuals and corporations who work to reduce our
11 carbon footprint. We believe that the supporting
12 renewable solar energy is one way to make a
13 difference.

14 Our farm had been contacted by several
15 solar farm companies over the past few years. Our
16 land is important to us, and we did not come to this
17 decision lightly. To engage with Union Solar, much
18 effort was made to -- much effort was made to
19 research the safety and impact on our property and
20 the community around us. I've lived on the farm for
21 68 years and full-time farmer for more than 44 years.

22 I value the beauty and the life of the
23 same properties of the earth, the soil, the area, and
24 our environment. In addition to my farm that I own a
25 portion of, my support for solar farms does not

1 change my love for farming and the agricultural
2 industry. Many years ago there were fences around
3 nearly every field that I farm. We also had a lot
4 of -- more livestock than we do today. Neighbors did
5 not think to complain about weeds around the fence
6 rows or unpleasant smells. As time progressed, we
7 found that it was too labored and not financially
8 efficient to keep livestock or the fences.

9 Over the decades our family corporation
10 has found that we needed to change some methods used
11 and the type of crops grown on our land. We have
12 always weighed pros and cons, safety -- safety and
13 finances and the effects on our environment. In
14 careful consideration of leasing lands for the solar
15 farm usage, we determined that not only was it in the
16 best interest of our farm but also in the advancing
17 new technology to generate clean renewable energy for
18 future generations.

19 Thank you for allowing me to testify this
20 evening. That's all.

21 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you for your
22 testimony, Mr. Goodwin.

23 Are there any questions for this witness
24 from counsel or the Bench?

25 Okay. Mr. Goodwin, you are free to go.

1 Thank you again.

2 MR. GOODWIN: Thank you.

3 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. It looks like our
4 next witness is Mike Morey.

5 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
6 you can enable your audio and video.

7 MR. MOREY: Good evening. Can you guys
8 hear me?

9 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can hear you, and I can
10 see you.

11 MR. MOREY: Okay.

12 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Please raise your right
13 hand.

14 (Witness sworn.)

15 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. Please state
16 and spell your name for the record.

17 MR. MOREY: My name is Mike Morey,
18 M-I-K-E M-O-R-E-Y.

19 ALJ AUGOSTINI: And can you state your
20 address including the township for the record.

21 MR. MOREY: Sure. 602 Frazier Road
22 North, that's Columbus, Ohio 43207. That's Hamilton
23 Township.

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

1 MR. MOREY: We represent the jurisdiction
2 that is in Union County with IBEW.

3 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. And that's through
4 the -- through the union, correct?

5 MR. MOREY: Correct, yes.

6 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Please proceed with your
7 testimony, Mr. Morey.

8 MR. MOREY: Well, thank you for allowing
9 me the opportunity to speak this evening. Once
10 again, my name is Mike Morey. I'm a business
11 representative and member of the International
12 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 683. Local
13 683 represents electrical workers that live and work
14 in the central Ohio area including the proposed Union
15 Solar site in Union County.

16 IBEW Local 638 strongly supports the
17 approval of this project. Approval of this project
18 will be beneficial to the residents of Ohio in many
19 ways. On top of providing jobs for local residents,
20 this project would increase tax revenues for the
21 local schools and municipalities. It would provide
22 diversities and energy generation in Ohio which is a
23 favorable benefit while adding to decrease the
24 pollution created by other sources of power
25 generation. Union Solar would make clean energy

1 available to the residents and businesses in Ohio.

2 Thank you for your time.

3 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you for your
4 testimony.

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

7 Okay. Mr. Morey, I don't have any
8 questions for you so you are free to go. Thank you.

9 MR. MOREY: Thank you.

10 ALJ AUGOSTINI: And it looks like our
11 last witness for this evening is Caroline Locke.

12 MR. SCHMIDT: You've been promoted. If
13 you can enable your audio and video.

14 MS. LOCKE: Can you --

15 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can hear you,
16 Ms. Locke.

17 MS. LOCKE: Oh. Hi. Can you see me?

18 ALJ AUGOSTINI: I can see you too, yes.
19 Thank you.

20 MS. LOCKE: Okay. Let me pull my paper
21 up here.

22 Okay. I'm ready when you are.

23 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Please raise your
24 right hand.

25 (Witness sworn.)

1 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. Can you
2 please state and spell your name for the record.

3 MS. LOCKE: Yes. My name is Caroline
4 Locke. My first name is spelled C-A-R-O-L-I-N-E.
5 Last name is spelled L-O-C-K-E.

6 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you. Can you
7 please state your address including the township for
8 the record.

9 MS. LOCKE: My address is 31657 State
10 Route 31, West Mansfield, Ohio 43358, and I reside in
11 Washington Township.

12 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. And do you work or
13 reside within the project area?

14 MS. LOCKE: We -- my family and I, we
15 reside within the project area.

16 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Thank you. You
17 may proceed with your testimony, Ms. Locke.

18 MS. LOCKE: Okay. Thank you. So like I
19 had said, my family and I live within the proposed
20 project area. We are located on State Route 31 which
21 is a fairly busy, you know, state route, and I had
22 actually submitted some documents to Ohio Power
23 Siting Board in regards to concerns I had about a
24 glint and glare study that Acciona Union Solar had
25 done on some of the roads where they are going to be

1 putting these solar panels. The glint and glare
2 study was actually never performed on State Route 31.
3 And that is extremely concerning because there are
4 multiple car accidents along State Route 31 and it's
5 actually a route for multiple semi trucks. It holds
6 just general busy traffic and then also, you know,
7 different vehicles, tractors, Amish buggies, things
8 like that. So, you know, we would really need to
9 have that glint and glare study performed on State
10 Route 31 to make sure that everybody is safe with
11 these being here.

12 Also the solar panels apparently are only
13 going to be 100 feet from the roads. And along State
14 Route 31, that is extremely irresponsible. People,
15 especially in the wintertime, you know, they will
16 slide off the road. There are car accidents. We
17 have semi trucks that will go off the road into homes
18 out here. You can find record of that. And I
19 actually submitted three years' worth of public
20 records that I was able to obtain from the Ohio State
21 Patrol and the Union County Sheriff's Department
22 showing those car accidents on that stretch of road
23 between York and Washington Township. So those are
24 available to view in the public comment section of
25 the Ohio Power Siting Board.

1 Let me see what else here. So I talked a
2 little bit about concerns with the setbacks from the
3 roads being only 100 feet. Now, the other concern I
4 had was allowing only 200 feet setback of panel
5 arrays measured from a resident's front door so not
6 even from their parcel, from their front door to this
7 array, right?

8 This is absolutely going to decrease that
9 person's property value. You know, Union County is
10 growing. Property values of homes should be
11 increasing. We should definitely not be
12 encouraging -- you know, we shouldn't be encouraging
13 them to be decreasing. And it makes me wonder why
14 it's allowed for Union Solar to be doing those
15 measurements from my front door of my house and not
16 from my parcel because they don't -- I didn't lease
17 my land. So I question that.

18 Let's see, what else here? I know that
19 there have been a lot of concerns and a lot of
20 discussion about flooding and drainage stuff. I'm
21 not going to repeat a lot of that. I think everybody
22 did a great job in addressing that. However, I will
23 say that with the flooding, I do want to add that I
24 submitted pictures of the project area underwater
25 on -- I took the pictures on May 9 of this month --

1 well, yeah, May 9 of 2021, and I did submit those to
2 the Ohio Power Siting Board as well. So you can see
3 that water sits.

4 And if you have solar panels, you know,
5 in that area, they are going to be completely
6 flooded. You know, I'm not sure if that damages the
7 solar panels. Does that mean that they are not going
8 to be able to be in service? You know, what would
9 that mean exactly? And then as far as the actual
10 drainage tiles go, I know that Acciona wants to in
11 their narrative and other information they've
12 provided, they are planning on pile driving 111,000
13 poles into the ground.

14 It's been recommended instead of pile
15 driving Acciona actually augers each pole into the
16 ground because that will allow them to be able to see
17 a damaged tile if there is a damaged tile, or it will
18 allow them to see if they actually, in fact, did
19 damage the tile. And that is extremely important
20 because when we are talking about flooding, you know,
21 my home floods all the time. I live in Byhalia, and
22 we just naturally have flooding out here. You know,
23 adding to that is -- is irresponsible so I think
24 coming up with a plan to at least correct that the
25 way that they're going to be putting in these poles

1 needs to be addressed.

2 Let's see, and I have a water concern.
3 ODNR has actually stated that the proposed project
4 area has -- is plentiful of ground and surface water.
5 It's also known that Bokes Creek runs into Columbus
6 and eventually the Ohio River that supplies people
7 with water, so I -- it seems to me that compliance
8 with a water protection plan would be necessary for
9 the health and safety of the residents, especially
10 when you are looking at the project area that has
11 flooding. And potable drinking water, we all have
12 wells out here.

13 Let's see, and then lastly I will just
14 say in the State of Ohio a checks and balance system
15 does not exist for the development of a public
16 utility solar farm. Such legislature is in the works
17 of being passed. However, at this point in time
18 nothing is available to protect leasing landowners or
19 non-leasing landowners alike.

20 Historically a large scale solar farm of
21 this size has never been placed around this many
22 homes. The rights of the landowners who have chosen
23 to accept a substantial amount of money and lease
24 their land in any way they want is not the issue at
25 hand. The issue at hand is the -- is for the rights

1 of health and safety for all the landowners in this
2 area. The issue at hand is to hold Union Solar
3 accountable for any potential damages to the
4 surrounding homes, their water supplies, and further
5 negative impacts that naturally arise while
6 constructing a project, especially of this large
7 scale.

8 A checks and balance is important on a
9 multitude of different levels, and the proposition
10 for a checks and balance is for the purpose of
11 counterbalancing influences by which an organization
12 or system is regulated. It is clear that Union Solar
13 is acting on a concentrated form of power. As a
14 checks and balance would be to ensure that power is
15 not concentrated in the hands of solely Union Solar
16 and only their best interests.

17 This project should be allowed to occur
18 here in this proposed area -- I'm sorry. This
19 project should not be allowed to occur here in this
20 proposed area as there are too many unknowns. So if
21 they want to have a project of this magnitude, with
22 everything that we know about this area and they --
23 if they want to invest here, with all of these
24 unknowns, that does not sound like a very smart
25 investment. Thank you.

1 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Okay. Ms. Locke, thank
2 you for your testimony and have a good evening.

3 ALJ SANDOR: Lauren, sorry. You were on
4 mute for the first part of that.

5 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Oh, okay. Are there any
6 questions for this witness?

7 No. Okay. Ms. Locke, thank you again
8 for your testimony. You are free to go.

9 MS. LOCKE: Thank you so much.

10 ALJ AUGOSTINI: Thank you.

11 Okay. So that concludes the statements
12 from all of the registered witnesses who wanted to
13 provide testimony this evening. You know, Matt and I
14 both appreciate all of the testimony, and the Board
15 definitely appreciates participation in tonight's
16 public hearing. I would like to thank everyone who
17 joined us this evening whether it was via Webex, over
18 the phone, or with our many viewers on YouTube.

19 With that this concludes tonight's public
20 hearing. Enjoy the rest of your evening. We are
21 adjourned. Thank you.

22 (Thereupon, at 7:44 a.m., the hearing was
23 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, June 3, 2021, and carefully compared with my original stenographic notes.

Karen Sue Gibson, Registered
Merit Reporter.

(KSG-7089)

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Summary: Transcript of the AEUG Union Solar, LLC hearing held on 06/03/21 electronically filed by Mr. Ken Spencer on behalf of Armstrong & Okey, Inc. and Gibson, Karen Sue Mrs.