

Comments on Pleasant Prairie Solar Project
Case Number 20-1679-EL-BGN
7.19.21

Dear Ohio Power Siting Board,

My name is Molly Nichols, and I am a resident of Franklin County writing in support of the Pleasant Prairie solar project.

Ever since my teenage years in the 90s, when I first learned about fossil fuel extraction and pollution, I struggled to understand why there weren't more solar panels and windmills being installed. And people said "they're too expensive" or "they don't produce enough energy." As I got older, I learned more about how much influence the fossil fuel industry had over elected officials and how this helped prop up and subsidize fossil fuels at the expense of renewable energy.

I heard so much talk about renewable energy and how desperately we needed it to address pollution and climate change. And still, for decades, nearly all of the energy we used was carbon based.

And now, finally, solar energy is actually more affordable than fossil fuels. The prices have gone down by more than 90% in the past decade. We are at the point where we can affordably use 100% renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions, creating cleaner air and water, and combating climate change.

When I learned about the community choice aggregation plan for Columbus, I was thrilled. Knowing that Columbus will be powered by renewable sources is so exciting and something that should be replicated in every community across the country.

We have the opportunity to ensure that this renewable energy comes from our own county, through the Pleasant Prairie solar project. This locally produced energy is enough to power almost 50,000 homes. The reduction in carbon emissions is equivalent to taking over 50,000 cars off the road. The project will hire over 800 people. In addition to all these benefits, 1.75 million dollars a year in tax revenue will benefit Franklin County schools and municipalities. These funds could be used to address environmental inequities in our region.

I'd also like to share some commitments Invenergy should make to ensure this project is adequately benefiting the community. The 800 workers that build, maintain, and operate the project should be unionized--with living wages and good working conditions. The company should also be deliberate about ensuring the jobs are available to historically excluded communities, including people of color and low income residents.

Invenergy must also address all of the concerns of Metro Parks and other nearby neighbors. The project should have little to no impact on Battelle Darby Metro Park, including use of wildlife-friendly fencing, locally native plants, and adequate setbacks

and screening. We must ensure this huge step toward environmental progress does not happen at the expense of the park and other neighbors.

Thank you for your time.

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