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Case # 21-0960-EL-BGN
Regarding Chipmunk Solar

PUCO

Part of the Mission Statement for OPSB is to promote "sound energy policies to protect the environment and land use". The OPSB and PUCO are tasked with creating guidelines to eliminate or minimize impacts detrimental to the continued use of productive agricultural land.

I have three areas to note:

1. Efficiency in site selection
2. The preservation of productive farmland
3. The preservation of rural communities as a significant component of American culture.

Efficiency in Site Selection

To date, there are 46 solar projects at some stage of development in Ohio. In reading through the public comments, there is MUCH opposition to these projects. This opposition could be AVOIDED by choosing sites that do not destroy valuable and productive farmland, and sites that do not invade rural communities. Those are the most quoted reasons for opposition. The time investment FOR ALL PARTIES (Solar Companies, the OPSB and PUCO staffs, and the residents of said communities) is HUGE. Time is a precious resource, and it could be much better utilized for all concerned by choosing alternate sites. Serious consideration needs to be given in choosing sites that are already industrial sites, sites that are FAR from homes, sites that involve land that is NOT productive farmland. In California, for instance, solar panels are used in school parking lots. They are designed as a type of carport over existing parking spaces. They serve as a shade for the vehicles parked, but at the same time generate electricity. Imagine all the potential from this one type of application. Parking lots of schools, universities, hospitals, shopping centers, warehouses, industrial parks, etc. would provide endless possibilities for solar projects. Rooftop application on all of these same entities would also contribute space for solar energy. AND AT THE SAME TIME, it would save our beautiful and scenic Ohio farmland and farming communities. This would also INCREASE Ohio's economic activity instead of exchanging one contributor for another.

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Preservation of Productive Farmland

Agriculture is the number one industry in Ohio. It contributes 125 BILLION DOLLARS in economic activity annually. Today's farmers are highly educated, stewards of the land, using best practices in conservation, minimizing soil compaction, nurturing the soils in their farming operations. Solar energy is still in an experimental stage. Though it may be "free" energy from the sun with supposedly no harmful pollutants, it is capital intensive in building and maintaining these facilities . These projects are marketed as "helping the state meet renewable energy standards and reduce the effects of climate change." This is only done by destroying the benefits to the environment attained through agricultural crops and other vegetation. I fail to see how a 2,000 acre solar facility composed of metal and man-made materials is better for the environment and climate change than the oxygen producing crops that also help with flood control and water runoff. Why is Ohio in a rush to approve an unproven energy source at the expense of the beautiful land we inherited? Once the land is gone, it is gone forever. Once the land is gone, it is not available for any kind of alternate use for 3 to 5 decades, even if a better technology comes along. What is the carbon footprint of these facilities through all stages of development? Please proceed with extreme caution. The future of Ohio is in your hands!

The Preservation of rural communities as significant components of American culture

Because these solar facilities involve vast amounts of land, they have an enormous impact on the local rural community. People who have lived in an area their entire life have contributed greatly to the area and have helped it to evolve, and are part of its history. They are the very foundation of the culture of an area, like a Norman Rockwell painting. In keeping with your rules of respecting cultural populations and contributions, these residents should be given the utmost respect. They are a living piece of Americana culture. I find it appalling that these citizens seem to have very little voice or weight in the decisions being made. Decisions that affect them tremendously. Decisions that rob them of the scenic country life they chose as part of their "pursuit of happiness" outlined in our country's constitution. Land that is adjacent to

lifelong residents should be immediately denied. At the very least, there needs to be some consideration for these affected residents at the township level.

Respectfully,
Paula and Leo Metzger