

BEFORE THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of Kingwood Solar I LLC for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need)))))	Case No 21-0117-EL-BGN SUBMISSION OF DIRECT TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO APPLICATION
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**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JEFF EWRY
FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
CEDARVILLE TOWNSHIP, GREENE COUNTY, OHIO**

1 Q-1 Please state your name, title and business address.

2 A-1 My name is Jeff Ewry. I am the chair of the Board of Trustees of Cedarville
3 Township in Greene County, Ohio. The township office address is 78 N. Main Street,
4 Cedarville, OH 45314.

5 Q-2 What is your educational and professional background?

6 A-2 I graduated from Wright State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in
7 Applied Mathematics. I am a software engineer in my professional career. I have been a
8 trustee for Cedarville Township for 14+ years.

9 Q-3 On whose behalf are you offering testimony?

10 A-3 I am testifying on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Cedarville Township.

11 Q-4 Has Cedarville Township taken a position on the Kingwood Solar project ("Project")?

12 A-4 Yes. We passed a resolution of opposition regarding the Project on December 9,
13 2021. That resolution was filed with the Ohio Power Siting Board.

14 Q-5 What were the factors that led Cedarville Township to oppose the Project?

15 A-5 Board members solicited and received feedback from citizens in our community
16 in a variety of ways. We had citizens show up and voice their opinions at our regular
17 board meetings and we held a special board meeting dedicated to gathering opinions
18 specifically about this Project. Board members also talked to residents that reside in
19 close proximity to the Project to gather their opinions. Board members also compared
20 the Project design to the Cedarville Township Zoning Ordinance requirements even
21 though local zoning regulations are not directly enforceable on large scale electric utility
22 projects such as this. The local zoning regulations emphasize the nature of our
23 agricultural community and desire to preserve farmland. The resolution specifically
24 references and expresses the Township's endorsement of the "Perspectives 2020: A
25 Future Land Use Plan" for Greene County, Ohio. The Board also took into account the
26 amendment to the "Perspectives 2020: A Future Land Use Plan" titled "Renewable
27 Energy And Farmland Preservation In Greene County." The Board also looked at some
28 of the studies referenced in the Project application and competing studies on the technical
29 aspects of the Project design. With this information, the Board drafted a resolution that
30 expressed our numerous concerns about the Project. The resolution was reviewed and
31 refined over several meetings before it was finalized for adoption and publication.

32 The "Perspectives 2020: A Future Land Use Plan" can be obtained from the
33 Greene County website at <https://www.greenecountyohio.gov/304/Current-Plans> and is
34 attached to this testimony as EXHIBIT A. The "Renewable Energy And Farmland
35 Preservation In Greene County" amendment to the "Perspectives 2020: A Future Land
36 Use Plan" is attached to this testimony as EXHIBIT B.

37 Q-6 How did you collect and track public input?

38 A-6 We created an EXCEL spreadsheet that tracked all comments made at the
39 November 15, 2021 public hearing held in Xenia, Ohio, and comments that were posted

40 on the Ohio Power Siting Board website. Our Board then used the Greene County
41 Auditor's online records to verify addresses, and when those searches were inconclusive,
42 we asked residents in the area if they knew where certain commenters resided.

43 The spreadsheet is capable of sorting on different columns of information so that
44 the identity and number of commenters from each of the three intervenor townships
45 (Cedarville, Miami & Xenia Townships) can be identified and studied. We paid special
46 attention to the comments of Cedarville Township residents regarding the Project. We
47 also tried to identify which of the commenters have a financial stake in the Project
48 approval (lease holders and family of lease holders) and other commonalities shared by
49 commenters who express support for the Project but reside outside of the three townships.
50 I am confident that the spreadsheet reflects all comments made at the public meeting and
51 posted on the Ohio Power Siting Board website.

52 The spreadsheet of public comments is attached to this testimony as EXHIBIT C.

53 Q-7 What is the Cedarville Township Trustees' opinion of that analysis?

54 A-7 The overwhelming majority of commenters residing in Cedarville Township
55 oppose the Project. Other than the few lease holders, all other Cedarville Township
56 commenters expressed their opposition to the Project. The process of updating this
57 spreadsheet is ongoing.

58 Q-8 What is your concern regarding property values and the housing density around the
59 Project?

60 A-8 There appear to be very few studies that address the impact of property values
61 near large scale solar facilities that are not funded by the solar industry. This is likely due
62 to the expense and time needed to do a study. Solar project developers have a long lead
63 time and the finances to conduct the studies. The residents that live next to these
64 proposed facilities do not have the time nor the financial resources to undertake such

65 studies in the necessary time frame. The studies funded by the solar industry tend to
66 show no impact to property values. That is not surprising because there is little chance
67 any study funded by the solar industry that showed a negative impact on property values
68 would get published.

69 There are two studies that we have found that were produced by universities and
70 not funded by the solar industry.

71 The first study is dated September 29, 2020 by the University of Rhode Island
72 titled "Property Value Impacts of commercial-scale solar energy in Massachusetts and
73 Rhode Island."

74 The University of Rhode Island study suggests a decline of 1.7% on properties within one
75 mile and a substantially larger decline of 7% for properties within 0.1 miles (528 feet) of
76 the solar site.

77 The University of Rhode Island study was mentioned on page 12 of Appendix F
78 (PROPERTY VALUE IMPACT STUDIES) attached to the Kingwood Solar application.
79 Although Kingwood recognized that the University of Rhode Island study found a 1.7%
80 property value decline for homes located within one mile of the facilities, Kingwood
81 characterized such a property value decline to be "immaterial." Furthermore, Kingwood
82 completely ignored that the study suggested a 7% decline in value for homes located
83 within 0.1 miles (528 feet) of the facilities. In addition, the study only considered 11
84 solar installations and only one of those was at least 50% the size (in mega-watts) of the
85 facility Kingwood Solar is proposing.

86 The University of Rhode Island study is attached to this testimony as EXHIBIT D
87 and can be accessed at web address

88 <https://web.uri.edu/coopext/files/PropertyValueImpactsOfSolar.pdf>.

89 The second study not funded by the solar industry was produced by the University
90 of Texas at Austin in May of 2018 and is titled “An exploration of property-value impacts
91 near utility-scale solar installation.” The University of Texas study looked at 956
92 confirmed solar facilities with 27 being in the 100MW+ range. The study estimates that
93 there are only 13 homes located within 500 feet of the 27 facilities, which is an average
94 of 0.27 homes within 500 feet of a 100MW+ facility. The study also includes a survey of
95 assessors from around the country. Of the 18 responses providing opinions regarding the
96 impact on property values within 500 ft of a 102MW facility, 8 of the 18 assessors
97 estimated a drop in value of 10% or more and 9 of the remaining 10 assessors estimated a
98 drop of 0 to 9%.

99 The University of Texas study is attached to this testimony as EXHIBIT E and can
100 be accessed at web address [https://emp.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/property-](https://emp.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/property-value_impacts_near_utility-scale_solar_installations.pdf)
101 [value_impacts_near_utility-scale_solar_installations.pdf](https://emp.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/property-value_impacts_near_utility-scale_solar_installations.pdf).

102 Based on the data in Appendix P (STRUCTURES WITHIN PROXIMITY TO
103 THE PROJECT AREA) attached to the Kingwood Solar application, the number of
104 houses of non-participating properties within 500 feet of the Project is 73. Based on an
105 analysis of the 15 solar projects in southwest Ohio listed on the Ohio Power Siting Board
106 website (excluding Kingwood Solar), the average number of homes within 500 feet of the
107 solar facilities is 24.6. Consequently, the housing density around the proposed Kingwood
108 Solar Project is approximately 3 times the density of other southwest Ohio solar projects
109 and 270 times more dense than the 0.27 homes per solar installation referenced in the
110 University of Texas study.

111 The analysis of homes within 500 feet of solar facilities in southwest Ohio in
112 attached to this testimony as EXHIBIT F (ANALYSIS OF OHIO SOLAR

113 APPLICATIONS FOR NUMBER OF RESIDENCES WITHIN 500 FEET OF THE
114 PROJECT).

115 Q-9 Does the Board of Trustees believe this is an appropriate use of affected land?

116 A-9 The Kingwood Solar Project proposes to use agricultural land that is located in
117 close proximity to several unique, scenic and historic areas that are tourist attractions.
118 The Project is out of character for our agricultural community and, as discussed in the
119 previous question, has a much higher housing density than other solar projects in
120 southwest Ohio. The Board also believes there is a high probability of property value
121 declines caused by proximity to the Project.

122 The potential impacts to adjacent property owners from damaged field tiles are
123 significant. The process for locating field tile in the Project area prior to construction, the
124 process for identifying damage to field tiles caused by construction, and the process for
125 promptly repairing main and lateral field tiles damaged during construction are not
126 adequately addressed in the Kingwood Solar application. Although Kingwood Solar
127 proposed language in the draft stipulations document that attempts to address this
128 concern, no agreement was reached between the parties on this issue.

129 There are no Ohio or national standards for determining the length of appropriate
130 setbacks from the solar panels or other generating equipment to nearby non-participating
131 adjacent residential property owners. Although the proposed stipulation increased the
132 setbacks from 25 feet to 250 feet from non-participating residences, the applicant has not
133 identified any objective standard used to support the suggested setback, or why larger
134 setbacks are not more protective of non-participating persons.

135 Although the application claims that the Project will have a minimal adverse
136 impact based on the noise emitted by construction equipment and electric power
137 inverters, Cedarville Township does not agree that the location of applicant's baseline

noise measurements is appropriate under the circumstances. Based on the data presented in the Kingwood Solar application Appendix K (PROJECT NOISE EVALUATION), it appears that one of the three locations (location 1) used to derive the daytime and nighttime ambient noise levels in the Project area were along one of the busiest and noisiest roads (including rumble strips on Clifton Road) in the Project area. It also appears that the ambient noise level listed for many of the 50 locations in table 4 and 5 of the Appendix K used data that was close to the location 1 levels even though they are located along roads that do not receive that amount of traffic which should be assumed to have a much lower ambient noise level.

Although the applicant claims that the Project will create a certain amount of temporary construction jobs and long term professional jobs, Cedarville Township does not anticipate that any of those jobs will create significant financial benefits to the local economy in Cedarville Township.

Finally, Cedarville Township does not believe that applicant has seriously considered how much damage might be caused by violent weather events that have regularly passed through the Project area over the last five decades. Based on data from a Cleveland website (https://www.cleveland.com/datacentral/2013/05/ohio_tornado_history_with_data.html), there have been 19 tornadoes in Greene between 1956 and 2018. That website's data is not current enough to account for another tornado in 2019. In 2018 a tornado caused significant damage across some of the very same parcels that are located in the proposed Project area. Based on historic data, Greene County experiences about one tornado every three years, and the Cedarville Township Board of Trustees have serious concerns about how much damage the next tornado will cause if a solar project is constructed in the proposed area.

163 Q-10 What are the Cedarville Township Trustees asking the Ohio Power Siting Board to do
164 about the Kingwood Solar project application?

165 A-10 The Board of Trustees of Cedarville Township would like the OPSB to deny this
166 application and preserve the character of our community.

167 Q.11 Does this conclude your testimony?

168 A-11 Yes, although the Trustees reserve the right to offer additional if new, relevant
169 information becomes available.

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Summary: Testimony Direct Testimony of Jeff Ewry electronically filed by Mr. Daniel
A Brown on behalf of Board of Trustees of Cedarville Township, Greene County,
Ohio

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Summary: Testimony Direct Testimony of Jeff Ewry with revised EXHIBITS
electronically filed by Mr. Daniel A Brown on behalf of Board of Trustees of
Cedarville Township, Greene County, Ohio