

From: [Puco ContactOPSB](#)
To: [Puco Docketing](#)
Subject: public comment 21-0823
Date: Thursday, May 5, 2022 5:47:31 PM

From: Kenn Keysor
Sent: Thursday, May 5, 2022 2:47:29 PM
To: Pelanda, Dorothy
Subject: Ohio Farmland/Solar

Dear Director Pelanda,

My name is Kenn Keysor. I am a resident of **Van Wert County, Hoaglin Township**. I am a lifelong farmer and I own and operate farm land in and around the proposed Wild Grain solar development. I am a fourth generation VanWert County farmer and a sixth generation Ohio farmer. As a farmer I have the utmost respect for our land and a love for nature and a desire to protect our natural resources. It is my passion in life to preserve these resources, namely the farmland, and to leave it better than I found it for future generations. Our community is about to be forever impacted by an industrial solar installation. This proposed project encompasses a large geographical foot print in our township. Scattered over several miles and several thousand acres. This land provides for us with habitat for abundant wildlife, fresh water, and crop land that feeds the world. It is of dire importance that we protect this environment and our resources while maintaining and preserving our ability to feed an ever growing and demanding population. Solar developments such as the **wild grain solar** proposal do very little to protect our eco system. They take valuable farm land out of production stressing our already fragile food supply. They have the potential to endanger and stress wildlife and livestock. They also pose a potential risk to our lakes and streams and our drinking water. As the director of Ohio Department of Agriculture I am sure that you understand how important our resources are and how we must continue to improve our preservation efforts while still being able to meet an ever growing demand for food, fuel, and fresh water. These massive solar projects go directly against those efforts. The following list is just some examples and concerns that I have about industrial solar.

1. **Food Supply.** These projects take valuable crop land out of production and place industrial scale power facilities on land that is zoned for and intended for agricultural use. Solar and wind installations **are not** farms. This lessens the amount of ground available to produce food. These type of installations would be better put on factory and warehouse roofs, elevated over parking lots or lining our interstate medians and road sides where thousands of acres lay idle and unused. Using crop land also places these power generators within close proximity to homes, livestock farms, and flowing waterways that in our case feed into lake Erie which already has problems. All over this poses a potential risk to humans and animals.

2. **Runoff and Pollution.** When these sites are developed the land because a hardscape. Solar panels do not absorb water. The ground around them can become compacted from construction and maintenance traffic. Ground elevations may be changed and surface water flows may be interrupted, altered or stopped all together. This can cause water drainage from neighboring (non- participate) farms to be impacted causing crop loss. This is a major issue in an area such as ours that relies heavily on water drainage via the surface as well as subsurface drain tiles. In many cases this water is drained across neighboring farms with communal drainage systems. Water that is drained through drainage tile is filtered through the soil before it exits into the creeks. Surface drained water is not. It often flows directly into open ditches and creeks and ultimately to lake Erie. These solar installations will greatly increase

the amount of surface runoff. During construction of these facilities existing subsurface drainage will most certainly be damaged or destroyed creating even more surface run off. This could have a major impact on wildlife and Lake Erie.

3. **Ground water.** There is the potential for ground water contamination. Solar panels contain toxic chemicals. I have already noted the potential for run off but what about the water that lays and then leaches into the ground? If these panels get damaged or as they age and begin to break down the potential for these chemical to come in contact with the soil and our ground water increases exponentially. These chemicals are then picked up by the water and leach into the ground or run off into our creeks ending up again in lake Erie. Our water table here is also shallow. Very shallow in fact with the water table laying only 10'-15' below the surface in many areas. Underground aquifers carry water all over our region. If these chemicals were to enter the water table the end result would be catastrophic. The solar companies claim they are safe and the risk is minimal but they can't guarantee zero runoff or contamination. The risk to our community is far greater than the reward.

4. **Wildlife.** These projects will be fenced in. We have a lot of roaming wildlife. Deer, foxes, coyotes and critters of all kinds. once we fence in hundreds or thousands of acres we will limit the grazing area of these animals. We will force them out of the fields and onto the roadways in order for them to navigate the country side. The solar installations themselves give off a frequency that can be harmful to animals and people. This will change the migration and feeding patterns of wildlife resulting in decreased numbers and the possible loss of life of countless animals. The loss of grazing land well also cause the animal population to consolidate into smaller areas. This will cause more crop damage, lower the population and increase the chances of disease spreading through the population.

5. **Quality of life.** I have addressed wildlife now lets talk about the people. People need sunshine, green fields, wildlife, fresh water, clean air and a myriad of other things that only nature can provide to lead happy, healthy lives. All of things combine to provide a quality of life and an expectation of life that we in Hoaglin township have grown accustomed to. All of these things together improve physical health as well as mental health and well being. Now imagine living in an area that provides all of these things and more. Imagine building a home here, raising a family, starting a business, making a life for yourself in a rural, agricultural "garden of eden". Now imagine that a small select few of your neighbors decide they want to abandon that way of life. They choose to sell or lease their property to someone who doesn't value those things. Someone who comes in with a well rehearsed sales pitches, prewritten contracts and an open check book. They have no regard for the quality of life of others, they have no regard for the environment or wildlife or for future generations that will live here. They claim they do and they spout claims of environmental protection and land owner compensations but all they are really doing is the bare minimum required by the law. They are doing what they are forced to. When the project is approved and built these people go home, probably to home with out a solar panel or windmill insight (speculation only). The residents of Hoaglin twsp will be left with the aftermath. Myself along with several hundred others will be forced to live in, around, or near a giant industrial power facility. As I live and work in Hoaglin township I will be exposed every single day to thousands of glass panels. This will take an emotional and psychological toll on all the residents of our county. After all no one would volunteer to live inside of a factory but we will be forced to.

6. **Land use.** This goes along with all of my other points but a change in land use will occur. We will be going from agricultural to industrial. I know that the renewable energy zones the state has set up allow for this but it's not right. This is allowing these "green energy" developments to circumvent current zoning. This takes away the voice of the people. It no longer has to go to a vote. It is

approved in Columbus and that's it. I have been told by our county officials that notices were sent out and meetings held but very few people recall any notices or meetings. Our township trustees decided that the tax money was too important and voted not to hold a community vote. The residents are being silenced by big money and politics. A small number of land owners very few of which live in the project zone will get to impact the quality of life of an entire community. A very few will get to financially benefit while the rest live with the consequences of the few's decision. We are agriculture. We are an agricultural community. We thrive on growing crops to feed the people. As much as they try wind and solar are not farms. They convert farm land to an industrial use. They are factories and they are being built on agricultural land near homes and they are having a negative impact on communities.

7. **Land values.** The solar developers continue to deny that they impact land values. They continue to lie. Studies have been done and articles published to the contrary. Commonsense will tell you the opposite is true. You surround a home or a community with thousands upon thousands of solar panels and the value of that property will decline. It is a fact. No one looks at a massive solar development and says boy I'd love to live there. The equity that people have in their homes, the homes they worked so hard for, will be diminished. Personal wealth will be negatively impacted.

These are just a few of the reasons I strongly object to this development.

I would like to briefly share another observation of mine. While at the May 3rd hearing in Van Wert I noticed that the first person to speak was a paid union steward. Someone who doesn't live here and whose testimony was solicited, bought and paid for. His testimony should hold zero bearing on your decision. I also witnessed false or questionable testimony being given by local residents who have signed contracts. I have been informed by one of my township trustees that Avangrid renewables held a meeting the week prior in which they gave talking points to and coached project participants on what to say. I am currently in the process of acquiring a document that was being given to local business owners by Avangrid representatives who were trying to get them to testify on behalf of the project. This was either talking points or a prewritten statement I'm not sure at this point. Now I know this is all hearsay and may not be based in fact. I am not accusing anyone of illegal behavior or foul play. I want to be clear about that. I only mention these things because this is what we are hearing. This is what we believe we are up against. Political tactics, big money, corporate lawyers and half truths. I speak from some experience in these matters as we dealt with the same things when the windmill project was built. Half truths and bullying tactics by developers. These developers are only here for the money. After all that is what developers do. They follow the money. However this development will put the local ecology and our environment at risk. It will disrupt lives, alter the landscape, and put families' finances, health and wellbeing in danger.

To be clear I am not against solar or wind. I believe all forms of energy production have their place and can be useful. I am however strongly against industrialized power facilities being built on agricultural land in close proximity to homes and livestock operations. I am against the impact this will have on our community, our ecosystem and our way of life. Taking land out of crop production especially in large numbers such as this will have a ripple effect on our community and our environment. Less land to farm means less grain. Less grain means less grain to local elevators and processors. That in turn means less revenue for these businesses who are already stressed. Less land also means higher land prices, less availability which will have a negative impact on farmers, both current and future generations. Less land also has a negative impact on wildlife and industrial developments put our ecosystem at greater risk.

In conclusion industrial scale solar and wind projects are a detrimental use of our resources. I ask

that you vote to disallow this project and any other future projects in Van Wert county, Ohio. Help us preserve our precious farm land and our way of life. Help preserve our wildlife and the natural habitat they have now. Preserve our quality of life and be a voice of reason when the final vote comes in.

Thank you for your consideration.

** Versions of this letter are being sent to other OPSB members.*

Kenn Keysor, Keysor Farms LLC 4101 John Yoh Road

Van Wert, Ohio 45891

419-203-7138 thekeysors@metalink.net Kenn Keysor thekeysors@metalink.net

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Summary: Public Comment of Kenn Keysor, via website, electronically filed by
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