

**BEFORE
THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD**

In the Matter of the Application of **Wild**)
Grains Solar Project, LLC for a Certificate of)
Environmental Compatibility and Public Need) Case No. 21-0823-EL-BGN
for a Solar Facility Located in Van Wert)
County, Ohio.)

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

GORDON PERKINS, GISP

on behalf of

**Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering &
Environmental Services, D.P.C.**

May 13, 2022

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

A.1 Gordon W. Perkins, Practice Area Leader Visualization Services, Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services, D.P.C. (EDR), 217 Montgomery Street, Suite 1100, Syracuse, New York 13202.

Q.2 What are your duties as a GIS Services Manager?

A.2 As Visualization Services Leader, I am responsible for the oversight of all technical analyses associated with visual resource assessments. This includes identification of visually sensitive resources, field evaluation and documentation, visibility analyses, development of detailed and accurate visual simulations, determination of impacts, conceptual mitigation design, and report production.

Q.3 What is your education and professional background?

A.3 I received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Landscape Architecture from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 2001 and I am a Certified Geographic Information Systems Professional. I have 21 years of professional experience, focusing primarily on visualization and visual impact assessment. In particular, I have extensive expertise in two-dimensional and three-dimensional visualization tools, photography, calibrated photosimulation methodology, and documentation of the visual environment. I have worked for several design and consulting firms and currently serve as Visualization Services Leader at EDR. In my career, I have managed a variety of visual impact assessment, landscape architecture, and planning projects.

Additional information on my experience is presented in my resume, which is included as Exhibit GWP-1: Resume of Gordon W. Perkins.

Q.4 Have you testified previously before the Ohio Power Siting Board?

A.4 Yes, I have submitted testimony on the following projects before the Ohio Power Siting Board:

- Union Ridge Solar (20-1757-EL-BGN),
- Juliet Energy Project (20-1760-EL-BGN),
- Sycamore Creek Solar (Case No. 20-1762-EL-BGN), and

- Dodson Creek Solar, LLC (Case No. 20-1814-EL-BGN).

Q.5 Have you previously served as an expert witness before any other court, agency, or other body on the subject you plan to offer testimony on today?

A.5 I have previously provided testimony pertaining to visual impact assessments, visual screening, and landscape design for a number of projects, including, but not limited to, the following projects in Connecticut, and New York:

- Tobacco Valley Solar (Connecticut Siting Council Docket No. 1313),
- Gravel Pit Solar (Connecticut Siting Council Docket No. 492),
- Canisteo Wind Energy LLC (NYS Department of Public Service Case No. 16-F-0205),
- West Point Partners, LLC (NYS Department of Public Service Case No. 13-01430), and
- Revolution Wind Project (RI Energy Facilities Siting Board Docket No. SB-2021-01).

Q.6 On whose behalf are you offering testimony?

A.6 I am testifying on behalf of the Applicant in the case, 21-0823-EL-BGN (“Applicant” or “Wild Grains”).

Q.7 What is the purpose of your testimony?

A.7 The purpose of my testimony is to provide additional context, support, and clarification regarding the information set forth in the Visual Resource Assessment, the Vegetation Management Plan, and the Lighting Strategy filed as Exhibits V, D, and F to the Application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need, filed by Teresa Orahood in case 21-0823-EL-BGN (the “Application”) on November 16, 2021

Q.8 Please describe the study you and your firm undertook on behalf of the Applicant.

A.8 A VRA was prepared to satisfy those portions of the requirements of Ohio Adm.Code 4906-4-08(D) that relate to the identification of visually sensitive resources, project visibility, and potential visual impacts resulting from construction of the proposed facility. Visually sensitive resources are defined as any formally adopted areas of recreational, historic, religious, archaeological, scenic, natural, or other cultural significance. Examples of visually sensitive resources include properties on the National Register of Historic Places, State Parks, and cemeteries, among others. Of note, the

Applicant filed a motion for waiver from Ohio Adm.Code 4906-4-08(D)(2)-(4) to allow for a reduced visual study area regarding the Project's impact on landmarks and recreation and scenic areas, as well as the visual impact of the Project, from a ten-mile radius to (i) a two-mile radius for the Project's impact on landmarks, and (ii) a five-mile radius for the Project's impact on recreation and scenic areas and its general visual impacts, which was granted by the Administrative Law Judge on February 3, 2022.

EDR conducted background research of publicly available documents to compile a database of potential visually sensitive resources located within the visual study area (a five-mile radius area around the Project site). Next, a viewshed analysis was performed in order to identify geographic areas and resources with potential Project visibility. The viewshed analysis incorporated and considered the screening effect of topography, structures, and vegetation, as captured in high-resolution lidar data from the Ohio Statewide Imagery Program. The areas of visibility are displayed on a map along with the visually sensitive resources to assist field crews in the representative site photography. A field visit on April 27 and May 21, 2021 served the following purposes: (1) to verify potential visibility of the Project (as suggested by the viewshed analysis); (2) to document the visual character of the various landscape types within the visual study area; (3) to identify the type and extent of existing visual screening; and (4) to obtain photographs for subsequent use in the development of visual simulations. Five visual simulations were produced from four representative viewpoints. Once complete, the simulations were evaluated by a qualified visual resources specialist and used to characterize the extent of visibility and visual impact likely to result from the Project. The methodology and results of the evaluation are then presented in the VRA report.

Q.9 What was your role in the Visual Resource Assessment Report conducted for the Application?

A.9 I provided direct oversight of all analyses and findings contained in the VRA report, mitigation, and lighting plan.

Q.10 What were the results of the Visual Resource Assessment Report you performed?

A.10 The visibility and potential visual impact of the solar panels and associated infrastructure diminishes rapidly as the Project is viewed from greater distances, where PV arrays tend

1 to blend more with features in the background. Consequently, it is anticipated that
2 impacts will be largely limited to areas directly adjacent to the Project. However, within a
3 number of these adjacent areas the proposed mitigation plantings provide significant
4 screening and also serve to break up the horizontal lines and man-made texture and form
5 presented by the PV panels and fence line. This helps the Project blend with the new and
6 existing vegetation rather than stand out as a discordant element of the landscape.
7 Vegetative mitigation will minimize the visual impact on adjacent residences and will
8 provide aesthetic as well as ecological benefits.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Direct Testimony of Gordon Perkins was served via electronic mail upon the parties of record listed below this 13th day of May 2022:



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Summary: Testimony of Gordon Perkins on behalf of Wild Grains Solar, LLC
electronically filed by Teresa Orahod on behalf of Herrnstein, Kara