

**BEFORE
THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD**

In the Matter of the Application of Wild)
Grains Solar, LLC for a Certificate of)
Environmental Compatibility and Public Need)
for a Solar Facility Located in Van Wert)
County, Ohio.

Case No. 21-0823-EL-BGN

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

Scott Denhman

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

On behalf of

**Wild Grains Solar, LLC,
a wholly owned subsidiary of Avangrid Renewables, LLC**

May 13, 2022

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

A.1 My name is Scott Denham. I am the Wetlands & Permitting Manager for Environmental Solutions & Innovations Inc. (ESI), located at 4525 Este Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45232.

Q.2 What is your education and professional background?

A.2 I received a Bachelor and Master of Science Degree from Youngstown State University in 2011 and 2013, respectively. My education and thesis were focused in Ecology, specifically wetland hydrology and botany. I have been in environmental consulting for 9 years and joined ESI in 2017. My position as Wetlands & Permitting Manager is responsible for environmental and ecological assessments including wetland and waterway delineations, ecological resource surveys, and species habitat assessments for real-estate transactions, construction projects, and right-of-way acquisition. I provide wetlands delineation services consistent with state and federal criteria. My work specializes in wetland delineations, ecological resource surveys, and waterway permitting and is responsible for identifying and delineating wetland resources for private and government clients. Also experienced in wetland mitigation planning, stream mitigation planning including wetlands creation, wetlands restoration, stream bed and bank restoration, wetland mitigation monitoring, wetland functions and values assessments, vegetation surveys, and environmental documentation. Experienced with permitting and planning processes for compliance with federal (Clean Water Act Sections 401/404, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act), state, and local environmental regulations. My field experience also includes numerous federal and state listed endangered species assessments.

Q.3 Have you testified previously before the Ohio Power Siting Board?

A.3 No.

Q.4 On whose behalf are you offering testimony?

A.4 I am testifying on behalf of the Applicant, Wild Grains Solar LLC

Q.5 What is the purpose of your testimony?

A.5 The purpose of my testimony is to describe the information presented in the Ecological Survey Report, Exhibit Q to the Application. I am prepared to testify regarding ecological aspects of the proposed site and surround adjacent land as they may pertain to the Project.

Q.6 Please describe your involvement with the Project.

A.6 Staff under my direct supervision conducted the fieldwork and helped prepare the report. I finalized the ecological report and submitted it to EDR. I am the acting Project Manager for the project.

Q.7 What is the role of you and your firm in regards to the Report set forth in Exhibit Q to the Application?

A.7 ESI was contracted by EDR to perform an Ecological Survey of the Wild Grains Solar Project. ESI was responsible for the fieldwork, desktop due diligence and report.

Q.8 What were the conclusions of the Ecological Assessment Report?

A.8 Wild Grains Solar proposes construction of the 150 megawatt (MW) Wild Grains Solar Project (Project) in Hoaglin Township, Van Wert County, Ohio. Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering, & Environmental Services, D.P.C (EDR) retained Environmental Solutions & Innovations, Inc. (ESI) to complete an ecological assessment for the Project. The assessment is based on preliminary design and layout provided by EDR and is required for inclusion with the application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (CECPN). Field review of the approximately 2,446-acre Study Area was completed on 1 and 2 June 2021. This report outlines review of published resource materials, existing site conditions, agency coordination, and field investigation results. Wetland and stream surveys identified three wetlands, nine stream segments, and four ponds in the Study Area. No impacts to aquatic resources are anticipated by project construction.

A project review was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Ohio Field Office and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to identify potential threatened and Endangered species (T&E) within the Study Area. Due to the

project type, size, and location, USFWS does not anticipate adverse effects to any other federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species, or proposed or designated critical habitat. There are no records of state endangered or threatened plants or animals within the project area. There are also no records of state potentially threatened plants, special interest or species of concern animals, or any federally listed species. ESI conducted field surveys and confirmed that all impacts to potential T&E species or habitat will be avoided by project construction.

On site habitat consisted of cultivated crops interspersed with deciduous forests, and very small areas of grasslands. All major woodlots will be avoided, and minimal tree clearing is proposed. The Project will adhere to the seasonal tree clearing restrictions of removal of any trees ≥ 3 inches diameter breast height (dbh) between 1 October and 31 March to avoid adverse effects to listed bat species.

Q.9 Please explain what, if any, additional testing needs to be performed prior to construction.

A.9 No additional studies are recommended.

Q.10 Are your opinions and conclusions in your testimony made with a reasonable degree of scientific certainty?

A.10 Yes.

Q.11 Does this conclude your testimony?

A.11 Yes. However, I reserve the right to update this testimony to respond to any further testimony, reports, and/or evidence submitted in this case.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Direct Testimony of Scott Denham 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 Scott Denham on behalf of Wild Grains Solar, LLC
electronically filed by Teresa Orahod on behalf of Herrnstein, Kara