

 **FILE**



21-0669-EL-BGN

January 17, 2023

Chairwoman Jenifer French  
Ohio Power Siting Board  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairwoman French:

I am writing on behalf of South Branch Solar and the opportunity for our community to welcome a state-of-the-art energy facility that will add real value to Hancock County and our region. South Branch will create a balance to our energy portfolio. We have a chance to have a solar facility powering homes and businesses in Ohio and regionally. The solar industry has built a presence in NW Ohio, including manufacturing; building; and operating these important assets.

As a life-long resident of Hancock County, and a member of the business community, I am impressed with the level of community engagement I see with Leeward. The project will generate \$1 million annually, with \$600,000 annually to Arcadia Local Schools. My grandkids now attend school here. We need more community partners who have a long-term play in our community.

I want to draw your attention to the Madison County Comprehensive Plan and highlight the Big Plain Solar project, which Leeward is developing, and has been under construction there since August. This is a great example of Leeward setting the standard for responsible solar development. The Comprehensive Plan states, "...this type of project, one that blends economic advancement with active stewardship of the land, is an example of how emerging industries can inject additional life into the County's agricultural economy, build upon community character based on land cultivation, and serve the residents who depend on the productivity of the land for their well-being."

Hancock County has the same opportunity. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts and opinions.

Sincerely,



Richard Kirk

RCK/skk

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