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Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

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From: Jason Saiter <saiter.j@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 6:17 PM
To: Puco ContactOPSB <contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov>
Subject: Written testimony of Oak run 22-0549-EL-BGN

Hello,

Jason Saiter Resident of
6710 Hawthorne Dr
Plain City Ohio 43064
Madison County
Darby Twp.

I live in the county of the project.

I would like to offer testimony in support of the Oak run Solar Project.

Allowing solar power development on Ohio farmland would contribute to the state's energy independence and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. By harnessing the power of the sun, Ohio can diversify its energy sources and provide clean, renewable energy to its residents. The development of solar power on farmland would also create new jobs in the growing renewable energy sector, supporting local economies and promoting economic growth.

Coexistence with Agriculture: Solar power installations can coexist with agricultural practices, making dual-use farming possible. Techniques like agrivoltaics – the combination of agriculture and solar energy production – enable farmers to grow crops or graze livestock beneath solar panels. This approach allows farmers to maintain their agricultural activities while benefiting from an additional, stable source of income from leasing land to solar developers.

Environmental Benefits: Solar power is a clean, renewable energy source that can help reduce Ohio's carbon emissions and combat climate change. By developing solar power on farmland, Ohio can contribute to national and global efforts to transition towards a more sustainable energy future. Additionally, solar power installations can help support local ecosystems by providing habitat for pollinators and preserving soil health through reduced tilling and pesticide use.

By investing in local solar power generation, Ohio communities can increase their energy resilience and security in the face of potential disruptions to the national power grid. Distributed energy resources like solar power can help ensure that communities have access to reliable electricity, even during extreme weather events or other emergencies. Encouraging solar power development on farmland would contribute to building a more robust and self-reliant energy infrastructure for Ohio.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service, Ohio had approximately 13.9 million acres of farmland as of 2020. This represents roughly 55% of the state's total land area, highlighting the abundance of agricultural land available in Ohio. While it is essential to carefully manage land use to prevent the depletion of valuable farmland, the integration of solar power development on a small portion of this land would not pose a significant threat to Ohio's agricultural production. By strategically locating solar installations on less productive or marginal farmland, Ohio can support renewable energy development without compromising its agricultural heritage or long-term food security.

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Allowing solar power development on Ohio farmland emphasizes the importance of landowners' rights to make decisions about the use of their property. Farmers should have the option to lease their land for solar installations if they believe it is in their best interest, whether for financial or environmental reasons. Encouraging solar power development supports landowners' freedom to diversify their income sources and make the most of their property while maintaining agricultural activities. Furthermore, the presence of solar installations can potentially increase property values, benefiting both landowners and their communities by contributing to the local tax base. By respecting landowners' rights, Ohio can foster a more equitable and sustainable energy landscape that benefits all stakeholders.

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