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Bcc	
Subject	Richwood Solar - CASE # 23-930-EL-BGN

FILE

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RE: Richwood Solar - CASE #23-930-EL-BGN

To the members of the Ohio Power Siting Board:

I am a life-long Union County, Ohio resident and farm wife, mother and grandmother, married 42 years to a 4th generation full-time farmer. I am writing to express my **STRONG** opposition to the proposed Richwood Solar project, **CASE#23-930-EL-BGN**, which plans to develop a large utility-scale solar facility on 1,569 acres of **PRIME FARMLAND** sprawled across Claibourne, Leesburg and Taylor townships in northern Union County, Ohio. If approved, this will be the **THIRD** OPSB-approved, large-scale solar project in **northern** Union County, which will bring the total number of prime farmland acres converted to solar panels and their components to nearly 10,000 acres in **NORTHERN UNION COUNTY** alone, burdening northern Union County with 10% of the entire state's large-scale solar development. When is enough, enough?! Public need has been far exceeded in Union County and therefore, the proposed Richwood Solar facility should be **DENIED**.

There is a tsunami of foreign-owned solar companies, chasing obnoxious government subsidies (aka American taxpayer dollars) and 30% tax credits, frantically flooding into Ohio to lease and convert hundreds of thousands of acres of some of the nation's most fertile farmland to large-scale solar facilities in the last 3-4 years, and they are still coming. We now have firsthand experience with the solar companies, including Samsung - Richwood Solar, and they are dishonest and blood-thirsty and will stop at nothing to get their piece of the government-subsidy pie. These companies are not concerned about the climate and they do not care about our land, our people or our communities; they care about one thing and one thing only - MONEY, and our fertile farmland is their ticket to the big money - a.k.a. OUR TAX DOLLARS. Currently, solar is subsidized at least 6 times more than any other energy source. During Obama's presidency, he spent at least \$39 billion a year of our tax dollars on his green energy projects, according to the **Institute for Energy Research** and President Biden is carrying that same torch. We now know that at least 36 of Obama's **taxpayer-funded green energy** projects went belly-up, with Solyndra being the biggest green energy scam of all. The

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government does not learn from its own mistakes because it pays no consequences for its mistakes - no one holds the government accountable. The American taxpayer is still being forced by the government to fund green energy with billions of our dollars from top to bottom and beginning to end. If it is such a great thing and the answer to saving the earth, it should not have to be obnoxiously subsidized with OUR tax dollars, WITHOUT OUR CONSENT. The truth is decision-making politicians in high places are financially capitalizing on shoving their New Green Deal down the throats of the American people and they are using our money to do it! The politicians are not concerned with whether solar is an affordable, efficient source of energy; they don't have to care if it works or not because they have NO SKIN IN THE GAME! They have NOTHING TO LOSE! BUT WE DO!!! In order for solar to produce the same amount of energy as a natural gas plant, it needs 90-100 TIMES MORE ACREAGE and consequently, those investing in renewable energy must convince the public that farmers are primarily to blame for climate change in order to grab and acquire control of their farmland. I realize that the Ohio Power Siting Board cannot control government overreach but it does have the power to deny large-scale solar projects that the majority of taxpaying residents do not want and that threaten tax paying residents' land, homes, jobs and lives.

According to American Farmland Trust, the United States loses 2000 acres PER DAY of fertile farmland to urban sprawl and development. That is a snail's pace compared to the recent large-scale solar energy land grab that has converted millions of acres of arable farmland to solar panels across the United States in the last 4 years alone. This should alarm every person that eats. When you spend your life growing food for the world and caring for our nation's most powerful asset, (our food-producing soil/land), it is unthinkable that we would ever have to fight our own government to preserve, defend and protect the nation's most fertile land that every person, plant and animal depends on to sustain life.

American farmers represent less than 2% of the nation's population, however, Union County farmers are responsible for generating 83% of the county's economy, which is agriculture. Agriculture in Union County generates \$900 per acre back into local businesses from production expenses yearly. Agriculture directly and indirectly supports and feeds our people. Solar panels and all of the components on thousands of acres of prime farmland in Union County cost the taxpayer billions of dollars, do not produce jobs and interfere with agriculture and all the businesses and people it feeds and supports. I don't expect you to understand or to relate to who we are or what we have spent our lives doing: raising food, fiber and fuel for the masses. I DO, however, expect you to respect who we are and what we do and what we know because each and every one of you would be in a world of hurt without the AMERICAN FARMER. Most Americans take for granted the farmer and the food he produces because most people in the United States have never had to worry about a food shortage but at the rate we are losing (converting) our most fertile farmland, food shortages are in our near future. The Farm Bureau states, "one U.S. farm feeds 166 people annually in the U.S. and abroad. The global population is expected to increase by 2.2 billion by 2050, which means the world's farmers will have to grow about 70% more food than what is now produced." In addition to those statistics, the Farm Bureau also states that "farm and ranch families comprise less than 2% of the U.S. population." Unfortunately, that percentage is dwindling, quickly. With farmland being converted to housing, industry and wind and solar energy at an alarming rate, and with the population increasing, it isn't difficult to deduce that our ability to grow food to feed the world is in immediate jeopardy. Just do the math.

At recent public meetings, Samsung Richwood Solar representatives have explained that the solar panels will be erected on “hundreds of thousands” of steel I-beams pounded 7-11 feet into the ground. This will absolutely break and destroy the 100+ year-old clay tile and mains that all neighboring farms and properties still depend upon for drainage. This will also absolutely cause flooding, septic/sewage issues and well-water issues. Who pays for those damages and lost crop yields due to flooding over the course of 30-50 years? Samsung rep. Kevin Dewine arrogantly answered that question in a township trustee meeting, and I quote: “Just call the 1-800 number hanging on the fence.” What a disrespectful slap in the face.

Large-scale solar on prime farmland is a reckless, greedy, short-sighted, self-serving abuse of power and tax dollars that threatens the fabric of our county and nation. Factor in all the toxic components in a solar array, including large lithium-ion batteries on tens of thousands of some of the nation’s most fertile farmland and it is crystal clear that this is not about solving climate change. This is all about money and control for a select few at the great expense of the whole nation. Our food-producing farmland is indisputably our most powerful national asset and should be protected at all costs by the federal government because at the end of the day, NOTHING is more important than food when it comes to sustaining life and protecting our national security. Unfortunately, our federal government has put our most powerful national asset in immediate jeopardy by obnoxiously subsidizing solar energy, which gives foreign-owned solar companies the financial power and leverage to lease and develop on Ohio’s fertile farmland and control it for 30-50 years! The 7 voting members of the Ohio Power Siting Board have the power to stop this reckless scheme from doing more damage to our county and wrecking our lives. Enough is enough!

If you personally lived around a utility scale solar facility or if you have taken the time to go look at the solar facilities the OPSB has already approved on **8,522 acres of farmland just in northern Union County alone**, you would see and understand how they have destroyed the tile and drainage, cleared and decimated native woodlands and wildlife habitat and forever ruined the aesthetics and property values, consequently, dividing our rural communities forever. You wouldn’t need me or anyone else to point out the ugly truth of solar on fertile farmland; you would know. The OPSB cannot possibly cast a vote on the Richwood Solar Project with a clear conscience without first taking a firsthand look in person at the negative impact that the aforementioned solar projects have had on our people, our land, our tile, and our communities. These companies are dirty players. They do not keep their promises and NO ONE is holding them accountable. Samsung - Richwood Solar has already used taxpayer dollars to bribe local schools, the local fairboards, township trustees, and local charities in the community to gain leverage and soften public push back. It is an age-old bait and switch strategy. Shame on them.

With all due respect, just **SEVEN PEOPLE** who do not personally know us or the people in our community and who have never farmed for a living and who have never lived in northern Union County and who do not currently live near the solar projects they approve and whose lives will never be directly impacted by their decision, will decide the fate of our land. Those seven people have ALL the power and the final say that will forever affect our lives and our way of life, our land, our communities, our water, our health, our property values, our tile and drainage and our future. I believe that every person is born with an innate sense of right and wrong. People often justify wrong to get what they want but, deep down, the sound-minded, conscientious people still know what

is right. There is nothing good or right about large-scale solar on tens of thousands of acres of the most prime, fertile farmland in the heart of Ohio. With all due respect, I strongly urge and expect the seven voting members of the Ohio Power Siting Board to vote their conscience, stand with the majority of residents in northern Union County and do the right thing and DENY the Richwood Solar Project, Case#23-930-EL-BGN. PLEASE.

Sincerely,

Julie Robinson
Lifelong Union County resident
Landowner/farmwife