



House Public Utilities Committee
House Bill 118
Opposition Testimony
March 23, 2021

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 118.

There have been many concerns raised about how utility-scale solar projects are sited, and I would like to offer some insights into the technical and rigorous elements of siting a utility-scale solar project.

My name is Mark Bonifas and I am a Principal Engineer at Hull and Associates, LLC where I manage projects in Hull's Renewable Energy, Infrastructure and Environmental markets. I am a civil engineering graduate of The Ohio State University, and I am a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional and a Registered Professional Engineer in Ohio and 15 other states. I have over 31 years of experience in permitting, engineering design and construction projects.

Hull has a strong history of providing comprehensive services to a broad array of energy clients in the upstream oil & gas, midstream, refining and petrochemical, electric utility and renewable energy sectors.

There is an application for all forms of energy, including solar, and I believe that all forms of energy are compatible in Ohio so long as they comply with environmental laws and regulations, identify and protect sensitive natural resources in and around project sites, safeguard human and ecological health, sustain properties for future use, and creatively reduce waste management costs.

Hull has been at the forefront of solar project development. In fact, in 2006 we installed a ground mounted solar photovoltaic renewable energy facility on the brownfield site of our Cleveland area office. We have worked on numerous utility-scale solar projects in Ohio, including Hillcrest Solar, which was the first utility-scale solar project to break ground in Ohio.

Whether a renewable energy project is constructed to serve a single facility or is a utility-scale project, extensive studies are performed to ensure the project is designed, permitted and constructed in accordance with current rules and regulations as well as many industry recognized technical standards. I am involved in several technical studies that guide the design and permits for renewable energy projects including critical issue analysis; site assessment and due diligence; environmental studies and permitting; energy modeling; geotechnical evaluations; transportation studies; civil engineering; stormwater management and inspections; and ecological inspection services. Many of these studies are performed during the permitting process and are required to demonstrate that the rules, regulations, and industry standards are met prior to issuing a permit for the project.

Over the past several years, Hull has played a role in the development of over 1.4 gigawatts of renewable energy. Hull is consistently recognized by our peers in the industry for our strengths in the environment, energy and infrastructure markets. We all want clean air and water, affordable and reliable energy, and safe roads, parks and other community assets. Our purpose is to help provide those essential needs to enhance our quality of life.

We are concerned that House Bill 118 would significantly hinder energy development in Ohio. We respectfully ask the committee to reconsider this approach and work for a sustainable and inclusive approach to energy development in Ohio.