

Testimony in support for Senate Bill 52
Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
June 23, 2021

Chairman Hoops and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 52. My name is Anne Rich and I support Senate Bill 52 and even further strengthening of regulations to prevent industrial solar facilities from being located by residential neighborhoods. We ask that this be passed as quickly as possible so that local communities can take action to support or oppose solar projects like Kingwood Solar. Kingwood Solar will harm over a hundred families in the Cedarville and Clifton area and halt the economic development in our communities.

The proposed Vesper Energy / Kingwood Solar 175 Mega Watt utility scale electric generation facility is a stark example of why local governments need the right to vote for or against the location of utility scale solar facilities in their communities.

When the Ohio legislature changed the definition of agricultural land to include solar and wind “farms,” I do not believe they envisioned a 1,500 acre 175 MegaWatt solar industrial site as proposed by Vesper Energy / Kingwood Solar. The entire footprint of the project is a series of solar facilities spread over nearly five miles and three townships. All three townships – Cedarville, Miami, and Xenia townships – and Greene County have filed to intervene and oppose this solar facility and yet the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) can listen to their objections and still simply vote to approve the Kingwood Solar facility. The OPSB is, in effect, our zoning board, but has no tie to our local community. As you can see from the map below, the solar industrial site borders the residential property lines of over 100 homes. The land in yellow has been leased for the Kingwood Solar industrial site, the properties in red are residential home sites. 142 homes are within 1500 feet of the solar facility. This is an industrial use of property that conflicts with the current residential use. The area in green is the Little Miami river and location of Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve, John Bryan State Park, and Glen Helen Nature Preserve.



We built our home on Harbison Road between the communities Cedarville and Clifton. We searched for a long time for a quiet, natural property. We built our home over 15 years ago and have continued to develop and improve the property. We certainly would not have built a home here had we known that the farm on our property line would be converted to an industrial solar power facility. My husband and I will soon retire from teaching. As for most people, our home is our primary real property asset that we anticipated would increase in value and be a resource in our retirement. If the Kingwood Solar industrial site is built, any potential homebuyer for our home approaching our property from the north or

from the south end of Harbison Road will be driving through chain-link fenced industrial solar installations bordering our country road. Kingwood Solar has informed us that solar panels will be located fifty feet from our property line. Our home value will obviously be significantly decreased.

Many of the homes in our neighborhood community have been recently built and are valued from \$300,000 - \$500,000. For the families who built within the last few years, being next to an industrial site may cause so much reduction in their property values to the extent that they will be “upside down” on their mortgages, owing more to the bank than the decreased value of their home. I am sure this will be of concern to the banks holding these mortgages. Some of these homes are surrounded on three sides by the solar facility which will cause a decline in their property value amounting to a government taking. All further home building and economic development will be halted by the Kingwood Solar industrial site.

The Kingwood Solar project will be located at the property line of more than 100 residential homes each of whom depends on water from our own individual wells. The solar facility is located over the Little Miami River Watershed. In the last few years, we have experienced hail, high destructive winds, and a tornado that ripped through the area of the proposed Kingwood Solar project destroying barns, damaging roofs, and uprooting trees. Given the high probability that thousands of solar panels will be destroyed, we are concerned about the release of toxic chemicals into the soil at our property line and close to our wells and water sources.

As you can see from the project map, the proposed industrial power plant will border the Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve. According to the Ohio Ornithological Society, Clifton Gorge is “perhaps the most scenic area in Western Ohio.” “Louisiana Waterthrush and Yellow-throated Warbler are easily found along the river, as are Belted Kingfisher and Wood Duck. Prothonotary Warbler is found on occasion.” It has been estimated by one research study that solar facilities kill 140,000 birds annually.

Kingwood Solar will be located close to Clifton Mill, a historical site. This thriving attraction brings visitors to our area throughout the year and especially at Christmas. The Historic Clifton Mill is one of the largest water-powered grist mills still in existence. The first mill at this site was built in 1802 by Owen Davis, a Revolutionary War soldier and frontiersman miller. The Legendary Lights of Clifton Mill won ABC's "The Great Christmas Light Fight" in 2018 and each year is a popular tourist attraction bringing tens of thousands of visitors to this quaint town. An industrial site will change the character of this tourist attraction.

We also prize the quiet environment of our neighborhood. Solar panels produce DC electric power which must be converted to AC power using an inverter. This process produces tonal sound at twice electrical line frequency (120 hertz) and its harmonics (240, 360, 480 hertz and higher). The transformers, operating day and night in the solar facility, are used to step-up the voltage for easier transmission into the local grid. The three sources of noise from with the transformer are core noise, coil noise and fan noise. This industrial noise level is not compatible with nearby residential land use.

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