

PROPONENT TESTIMONY
SB 52 Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Matthew R. Nixon – Preble County
March 9, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and the members of the Committee. My name is Matthew Nixon and I reside in Israel Township in rural Preble County. I am here in support of SB 52 that addresses the need for local participation in responsibility siting utility scale wind and solar in Ohio.

The focus of my testimony is on my experience as a local farmer and as an Israel Township Trustee. I am not against solar, but it needs to be done in the right way. Utilizing prime farm land is not the right way. If all of the risks associated with solar can be appropriately addressed, then utilizing non-tillable farmland would be best.

Under any scenario, local citizens must have a vote. People at the local level must have a voice, since they will have to deal with all aspects of the project during construction, operation, and demolition.

Transparency has been a major problem on the proposed solar project in Israel Township. Theoretically, solar sounds great, but many issues have been identified but remain unanswered. Concerns include the batteries and transmission system safety and the potential impact on the community. There are many other unanswered questions, as well.

Given the many unknowns, unbiased experts are needed to evaluate all of the risks associated with a major solar project. A solar project should not be approved by the state authorities until all of the risks are known and addressed. After the risks have been identified and the project has been approved by the state officials, then local citizens should be given a vote as the final step in the approval process.