



Renewable Energy.
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House Bill 128, Electric Laws

Solar Provision of HB 6 Re: Hillcrest Project (Brown County)

Interested Party Testimony- Terrence O'Donnell

Ohio House Public Utilities Committee

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

1:00 p.m. Room 121

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, and Ranking Member Smith:

Innergex Renewables Development USA LLC is the owner of the Hillcrest Solar Project (Hillcrest), a 200 MW_{AC} photovoltaic solar project located in Brown County, Ohio. We began construction in January of 2020 and are currently 91% complete. Last week we peaked at over 510 workers on site. We continue to provide specialized training to unskilled workers in the specialized renewable energy sector. Over the summer, we had 900 workers on site at our peak employment.

Hillcrest's construction has served as a timely economic stimulus to Southwestern Ohio while other sectors of the economy face unprecedented downturn and unemployment. Once the project is operational, it will contribute \$1.8 million annually to the Western Brown Local School District, Green Township, and Brown County. This revenue is certain, unlike sales tax and payroll taxes which have seen reduction during pandemic conditions. Hillcrest's steady stream of revenue will continue for 35 years, as landowners and local government share in the project's prosperity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our construction team has worked safely, providing well-paying local jobs. Our commercial operation target is scheduled for March 25, 2021.

Unfortunately, HB 128 as written undermines the economics of the project which were predicated on the solar provisions of H.B. 6 and pulls the proverbial rug out from under us by repealing funding for our project and a handful of others. And our project has already entered a commercial arrangement with a large Ohio employer with pricing reliant on this revenue stream.

We write to request the General Assembly stand by its decision to fund the solar projects in HB 6. Hindering financial agreements with a sudden reversal in state policy makes Ohio a risky place for any company to invest. Innergex invested in good faith in Ohio's energy market and should be kept whole. Ohio must show leadership to financial markets and retain a reputation of attracting asset financing, private equity, and tax equity from global markets.

During the past 12-month economic downturn, Hillcrest stands out as a bright spot in Ohio's unemployment statistics. We ask for your leadership to provide a certain future for Hillcrest and maintain market confidence for investors and developers who are bringing capital into Ohio and generating employment opportunities. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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