

PROPONENT TESTIMONY - HB 118
House Public Utilities Committee
Stacy Brenneman
Allen County
March 9, 2021

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Committee. I am Stacy Brenneman and reside in Allen County. I support HB 118 and would like to address the Birch Solar Industrial Complex.

My name is Stacy Brenneman and I have lived in Ohio my whole life. I am a current resident of Allen County and I am in support of HB 118. I am all for responsible use of renewable energy, but I also am aware that a large amount of land will need to be used for this type of power generation. It should be up to a local community to decide what project or projects best benefit them, not some group of committee members that “have no stake in the game.”

To illustrate my point that this is more of a land use issue than a power generation issue, I would like to “crunch some numbers” for you.

I was able to find how much energy was produced in Ohio in Dec 2020¹. It was 11,832 thousand megawatt hours / 31 days in December you get 381.677419 thousand Mwh per day, on average, in December. Now if you move the decimal to get rid of the thousand (3 spaces to the right), you get 381,677.419 Mwh per day, on average, Ohio generated in total power.

Now the solar industry says that 4.5 to 6 acres of land are needed to generate 1 Mwh of power. So, to generate one days' worth of power on solar in Ohio we would need 1,908,387.095 acres (assuming 5 acres average/ 1Mwh). That is a lot of acreage. I converted those acres to square miles (there are 640 acres in a square mile) so we will need approximately 2,981 square miles of Ohio land. There are 40,861 square miles in Ohio², not all 40,861 square miles are able to be developed for alternative energy.

According to the solar lobby, Ohio farmland is the most cost effective (cheapest) and easiest to develop for solar and wind. In 2020, 13,600,000 acres were farmed or 21,250 square miles³, 7% of Ohio's farmland. Now that may not seem like a high percentage, but it is a very high number of communities that could be affected by the solar industry, without any say in the development.

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/state/data.php?sid=OH>

² https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/how-wet-your-state-water-area-each-state?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects

³ https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=OHIO

Currently, Ohio residents can voice their opinion during the OPSB process, but these projects have a history of never being denied. The “need” is always proven by the developer, and all community protests are largely ignored. This legislation would give the local community more of a voice.

In Lima, we are facing a solar company that, though they say they listened to the community, did the opposite. They ignored the townships land use plan, surrounded people on four sides by their industry, did not provide setbacks from property lines, and promised that we would not hear the transformers outside of the fence, but according to the permit located transformers right next to property lines. This all could be better managed and more of a balance could be had, if the local townships had more of a say in the development of projects like these. I urge you to regulate large scale solar facilities in such a way to give the permanent residence of Ohio a voice and force out of state, for profit companies to work with the local community. This will affect every resident of Ohio and is a land use issue more than a power generation issue.

Thank you for your time,

Stacy A. Brenneman

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