

1081 Bernard Road
New Vienna, Ohio 45159
March 22, 2021

Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee
Senator Bob Peterson, Chair
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Senator Peterson and Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views about the impact of SB 52 and the negative consequences this legislation will have on our state should it become law.

We are physicians with deep roots in our community and actually live in Rebecca's childhood home. In addition, we have a family farm, some of which is to be developed as part of Invenergy's Yellow Wood solar project.

As residents of rural Ohio, we know well the challenges small communities face, both from economic and from health perspectives. We are at a loss to understand why the Ohio legislature would embrace legislation which would dissuade renewable energy companies from investing up to \$9.6 billion dollars into our state, much of it in rural Ohio. The Yellow Wood project could result in \$4.5 million in annual payments to local governments and property owners as well as create as many as 800 construction jobs for Ohioans. The revenue could allow Clinton County to address needed public infrastructure, including the lack of broadband access. This lack is a significant roadblock to our community's economic growth.

We also want to address misinformation being shared by some supporters of these bills. Solar opponents suggest the deployment of solar panels would somehow negatively impact Ohio's environment. We studied the construction and function of solar panels extensively before installing them at our residence. As physicians, we would not have embraced solar technology if we felt it had any potential to harm our home's air, soil, water or future generations.

As Ohio voters and taxpayers, we have watched the actions of this Senate for many years. Some policy decisions we have agreed with and some we have not, but we always shared one important belief with our lawmakers: that the rights of property owners are fundamental and decisions which impact property rights should be undertaken cautiously. Make no mistake, this legislation strikes at the heart of our rights as landowners. Thousands of rural landowners in Ohio are deeply worried their farms may not be profitable enough to pass down to their descendants. This legislation takes away an important option which may help ensure Ohio farms remain part of a family's legacy.

Many Ohio townships are sparsely populated and solar projects may cross multiple township boundaries. Under this legislation, fewer than 100 township residents could decide referendums which could halt investments involving tens to hundreds of millions of dollars. Passage of SB 52 would have the effect of bringing investment in renewable energy in Ohio to a halt. Ohio would go from being an emerging leader in the renewable energy sector to being a non-participant.

The fossil fuel industry has a long history of driving public policy in Ohio and we are concerned this bill may be another instance of that industry's dominance. By rejecting SB 52, you have an opportunity to protect the rights of landowners and to let the free market determine Ohio's energy future. We urge you to vote **NO** on SB 52.

Respectfully,

Dr. Craig Strafford, MD, MPH
Dr. Rebecca Strafford, MD
New Vienna, OH