

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Senate Bill 52
Opposition Testimony of Jacki Verhoff
March 23, 2021

Chairman Peterson and committee members, thank you for opportunity to be here today to provide testimony on Senate Bill 52.

My name is Jacki Verhoff. I was born and raised in Miller City and am the owner of the restaurant, Mack & Rita's, a business that has been in my family for 63 years. Miller City is a small town with less than 200 people in it, a church, a high school, Mack & Rita's and two other food businesses. We all depend on each other to keep Miller City a good place to live. Since we are a rural community and the closest town is 8 miles away, people are unlikely to just come to town for food. This means that activities at the church and high school that bring people to Miller City are critical to the survival of our town—if any of the services or businesses in Miller City fail, we all fail.

As you may have heard, Miller City has needed a sanitary sewer system for over twenty years. We've tried several times to get a sewer system, but it has never worked out. Because Miller City doesn't have a sanitary sewer, the town's growth has been limited. Worse than that is the fear that the high school might have to close at some point if we don't get one. This would devastate Mack & Rita's as well as Miller City.

Since Avangrid Renewables has proposed building the Powell Creek solar project near Miller City, I have hope for the future of our town again. I am not getting any money from the project, but I'm thrilled with the local project benefits my community has negotiated with Avangrid. The PILOT negotiated for the project includes \$26 million dollars over 20 years for local governments and money to help pay for our sanitary sewer. What's even better is the sanitary sewer project is so important to our community, that everyone is pitching in to make it happen—Village of Miller City, Liberty and Palmer Townships, project land owners, two school districts, Avangrid Renewables and the County are all sharing a portion of their Powell Creek solar project revenue to help fund the sewer upgrade. It is truly a community project.

Please support the Powell Creek solar project by opposing SB 52, which threatens the project. Thank you for your consideration.