

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

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, and Ranking Member Williams, thank you for the opportunity to submit opposition testimony on Senate Bill 52. My name is Richard Giffen.

I am a retired farmer who has farmed the land I farmed for 25 years before renting the farm to my brother. I come from a family of dairy farmers, along with my wife. I have been a member of the Farm Bureau for almost 50 years. I have three children and seven grandkids, none of whom are involved in agribusiness.

The past few years of farming have been difficult, as everybody in the industry knows. It is an unpredictable job. Grain prices can go south without warning, the weather cannot be predicted, and the hours are long and tough. I am devoted to the farming business, but as I get older I cannot keep relying on it for my income. Solar gives me a way to level my income and ensure that it is steady.

When the company who offered to educate us on the benefits of solar farming reached out, I decided that my entire family would be present for the meeting. I made sure every member of my family, including my wife and kids, were fully in agreement that this was the correct move. Everybody agreed that not only was it beneficial to us, but it was beneficial to the surrounding community.

People may not like the idea of a solar farm, and I respect that, but ultimately this is my land that I have chosen to invest in a project that I believe in. In addition, this investment will pay it forward to the surrounding community. The tax base this project will create will be significant for our schools, township, and county. This project will also create jobs for the community, benefiting the economy.

Solar farming is no different than growing corn for ethanol. Corn produces energy, and a solar farm on my land will do the same. Solar companies are required to follow some of the most rigorous and stringent laws in Ohio. These regulations will keep my farm operating in a way that is efficient for the community but allows me to retire and keep the land that I have owned and operated for over 43 years.

Thank you for listening to my testimony, and I hope you will consider opposing Senate Bill 52 due to its detrimental impacts.