

## Opposition Testimony to Senate Bill 52 and House Bill 118

Chairman Peterson and members of the Senate Public Utilities Committee, I am submitting written testimony opposing Senate Bill 52.

I am Rick Buehner and I live in Gasper Township in Preble County Ohio. I work in the Manufacturing Engineering Department at Henny Penny Corporation. We make food service equipment for companies all over the world like KFC, Wendy's, and McDonalds. We make Pressure Fryers, Open Fryers, Heated Holding Cabinets, and Heated Display Cabinets.

We are a part of a solar project and we care about our farm and our neighbors. My dad suffered a severe injury on the farm and was a contributing factor forcing him into bankruptcy. After my dad's financial issues our neighbor approached me and said, "if you help us farm, we will help you". He has all the equipment needed and I have the skill to operate everything. Been doing this for 40 years. I have two boys and my oldest son works for a farmer—he is a truck driver and farm hand. We have an ethanol plant to the north and the Ohio River, just 50 miles south. I truly see what I am doing as very similar to ethanol—I am going to grow electricity!

After the solar is operational, I will continue to farm. I will then have a stable revenue stream that will help sustain my farm and our near retirement.

What you will find is that many farmers have off-farm income.

I never knew that solar farming could be an option. But the more I worked with the company, they earned my trust. My attorney even said, "this is the best contract I have ever read that takes care of landowners." We didn't just look at dollar signs. Our goal is to pass this along for generations. We wanted our children to have buy-in as well. We made changes in the contract to protect us and our neighbors on tiling and noxious weeds.

Mother nature does not guarantee farmers a quality crop and the grain markets are not guaranteed either. At the public meeting I heard someone say, "why don't you rent it out?" Well, it's easier to tell someone what to do with their land than it is to step into someone else's shoes and be respectful of their decisions.

I ask that the members of this committee please respect the farmer, the landowner, and know that we are going to do what is best for our family and our community. Please oppose SB 52 and HB 118.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have also attached my public comments from a hearing on the project:

My name is Richard C Buehner and my wife Jan are 100% in favor of turning part of our farm in Gasper Township into a solar farm. I have been involved in agriculture my entire life. My family moved to a farm in Gasper Township in 1964. Growing up on a farm I learned hard work, long hours, and hardship. My Dad was threatened by bankruptcies for years. So, my siblings and I grew up extremely poor, but I learned a very valuable life lesson. I was not going to live my adult life the same way I grew up. Shortly after high school I met the girl of my life and we married 2 years later. Prior to marriage I realized I could not support a family farming, so I took an off-farm job and continued to help on the family farm. The neighbor elderly widow lady Lessie Brown, whom I checked in on daily, wanted me to have her 50-acre farm in 1980. I struggled to get the down payment but managed with the help of a local banker. Those of you old enough know what happened in the early 80's. Land values declined significantly, interest rates hit 13+%, and the banks wanted their money back. Many farmers over the next few years lost their farms including my Dad. My wife and I have made a lot of good decisions and have busted our asses to keep our farm. I have now lived on Antioch Road for 55 years and have farmed some of the same land since I was 4 years old. I have always taken care of and respected the land the good lord left us and would never do anything to permanently damage this land. My wife and I and our 2 sons have spent 100's of hours coming to this decision. We have done a lot of research and hired an attorney whom is a farmer and has done extensive work in agriculture and energy. We are both approaching retirement age and our goal is to pass our farm on to our sons and our grandsons. Our Sons understand that I want to look back from where ever and see a century farm sign hanging on this property.

We have worked extremely hard for our land so now is the opportunity for our land to work for us.

My wife and I attended the Angelina Solar Project's Public Hearing a month ago. We listened to all the testimony very closely. There were several excellent speakers with a lot very interesting information. All that information didn't change my mind. Yes, my property is a part of this project but, I still would be in favor of a solar farm even if my farm was not eligible. The reasons that I am is because whether we agree on the science behind climate change, we need sources of energy from renewable sources such as wind and solar. We have God giving sunshine and wind which we can transform into energy. We all have heard the pros and cons on this topic so I'm going to save a whole bunch of time and not repeat everything all over. Farming is a business and I run it as a business. The goal of a business is to make money and grow if you're not making money and growing your business is dying. As a farmer I'm always looking for ways to diversify. After this past harvest extending into spring and planting season going so poorly. Our potential yields have already been cut drastically and the corn crop being planted so late that every single bushel will need to be mechanically dried costing even more dollars on a very possible less than average yield. This to me is making the solar panels even more attractive.

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