

May 19, 2021

The Ohio Senate
Energy and Public Utilities Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4275

Chair McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mark Walter, Director of Legislative & Regulatory Affairs for Savion, LLC. Savion is a utility-scale solar and energy storage development company based out of Kansas City, Missouri and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Macquarie Green Investment Group. We are actively developing in 28 states with a portfolio of 14,000 megawatts (MWs) of solar and storage worth over \$16 billion in capital investment. In Ohio, we have an active portfolio of over 700 MWs worth approximately \$825 million should the projects get the chance to build.

As a company with two projects that have received full permits from the Ohio Power Siting Board, Atlanta Farms in Pickaway County and Madison Fields in Madison County, Savion is positioned to speak from experience about the impacts SB 52, including the substitute language, would have on solar development in Ohio. Without question, this substitute bill would decimate utility-scale solar development and all but ensure Ohio loses dozens of solar projects, the associated investment and tax dollars, and jobs that come with them.

For the past several months, we have attempted to work with the bill sponsors and interested parties to ensure that local voices are more prominent in the development process. Despite our good faith efforts, our industry was not involved whatsoever in the drafting of the current substitute bill, which keeps the ability for township trustees to kill a project that is being reviewed by the OPSB until the day before a permit is issued and adds an additional layer of regulation on the front end through opt-in local zoning.

To help the Committee understand the level of scrutiny that our projects are subjected to under the current OPSB permitting process, I have given each Committee member a thumb drive with the entirety of Savion's Atlanta Farms OPSB application. This application includes 15 separate studies which we were required to complete prior to applying including geological studies, cultural studies, ecological impact studies, and more. Those studies took many months to complete and cost approximately \$500,000. Additionally, we paid \$50,000 just to apply for the permit. Total, the permitting process preparation and issuance took several years and included multiple local meetings, some of which OPSB attended and required the project to make changes.

I would like to point out a few important portions of the application narrative, which some legislators and supporting witnesses have spoken about:

- Pg. 24 – Economic impacts, tax revenues, jobs impacts, and payroll estimates
- Pg. 27-30 – Public comments and Savion's local engagement
- Pg. 31 – Decommissioning plan



- Pg. 42 – Health, safety, land use, & ecological impacts
 - This includes studies on wildlife impacts and runoff/drainage studies
- Pg. 72 – Visual impacts

I encourage Committee members to at least skim our application and see the level of detail and attention we provide to these important issues. This kind of information deserves the attention of a fully devoted staff of experts who can help analyze when a project has shortcomings that need to be remedied, including issues with lax public engagement and issue resolution. We support bolstering the current process to include more public engagement and where local issues can get resolved by an Ohio agency with the knowledge, expertise, and legal authority to hold projects accountable to local needs.

The timing, cost, and significant additional regulatory burden that SB 52 creates for solar development in Ohio would cause Savion to pull out all possible planned investment in the state. The amount of risk that this legislation brings to an already risky industry would make it nearly impossible to raise the capital necessary to continue development. While we are open to working with locals, legislators, and regulators to improve the current OPSB process, we strongly urge you to reconsider this solution, which is particularly challenging for our industry and we are ready and willing to work with this committee towards a better solution.

I appreciate your time and ask that the Committee vote “No” on SB 52. I’m happy to answer any questions the committee may have at this time.

Sincerely,



Mark Walter

Director of Legislative & Regulatory Affairs

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