

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Senate Bill 52
Opposition Testimony
May 19, 2021

Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 52. It is an honor to stand before you today.

My name is Chad Eisler, and I am the superintendent for the Madison-Plains Local School District.

As you may remember, I stood before you in March of this year and provided testimony. As Senate Bill 52 is still being considered, I wanted to provide further testimony to speak to the benefits having the solar farms in our school district will provide, specifically the financial benefits.

As things currently stand, Madison County currently has three solar projects in various stages of the development process. Two of them are in my school district, and it is with regard to those two projects I would like to speak.

The first solar farm is known as the Madison Solar Project. It will be located in Fairfield and Oak Run Townships and will be 2,483 acres in size. It is projected to have the capacity to generate 196 megawatts of electricity. This project has gone through the rigorous approval process and has been given approval by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) to begin construction. Once construction is complete and electricity is being produced, the school district stands to see a new annual revenue stream of approximately \$1,000,000.

The second proposed solar farm solar farm in my district is known as the Fox Squirrel Solar Farm. If approved, the estimate for generating capacity is 577 megawatts. The project will be located in Oak Run, Pleasant, and Range Townships. The project area is 3,766 acres, but the project will occupy approximately 3,444 acres. As of this morning, the project certificate for approval to begin construction is pending. Once completed, this project should provide an estimated annual revenue to my school district of approximately \$3.9 million.

With an annual budget of approximately \$16 million dollars, the combined revenue from these two projects stands to be approximately 24% of our annual budget. As you know, that is significant.

In the time that has passed since I was last before you, my district has suffered the defeat of an earned-income tax levy renewal request. One of the challenges for us in attempting to get the levy renewal to pass is that people believe the solar farms are coming, and they know there is a significant amount of revenue tied to them for the school. While we do not believe the solar farms eliminate all of the financial struggles our school district faces, their successful

construction completion and generation of power do represent for us a substantial piece in solving the financial puzzle for my district.

I also know that generally speaking, people often do not like change, and the concern is that if this legislation is passed and these clean energy initiatives have to go to a local referendum vote, it is quite possible that they will fail, and then the burden for funding the schools will go back squarely on the tax payers. To replace the kind of revenue the solar farms will bring in would take an 11.53 mill property tax levy or a 2.125% earned-income tax levy. That would be extremely burdensome on the residents of my district.

The loss of the potential revenue streams that the solar farms represent in my school district would be devastating for the schools. I imagine that other school districts around the state would be similarly adversely affected by the passage of this legislation.

As such, I humbly and respectfully ask you to please allow these clean energy initiatives to be developed in Ohio. Our children stand to benefit from them through the increased financial resources their schools will receive, and their parents and guardians will benefit through not having the burden of paying the taxes that would replace these revenue streams.

Thank you for your time and for considering my request.