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Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 118 (Solar Generation Fund Repeal)
September 21, 2021

Chair McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for allowing us to submit written opponent testimony today on SB 118—legislation that proposes to repeal the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority’s (OAQDA) Solar Generation Fund previously established under HB 6. Invenergy is a utility-scale developer of renewable energy facilities. To date, we have developed, contracted and/or built around 29,000 megawatts of wind, solar, natural gas, and energy storage projects globally. Invenergy has been developing different energy projects in Ohio for nearly a decade. Once developed, our facilities inject millions of dollars into local communities, create thousands of construction jobs, and employ hundreds of full-time operations and maintenance staff. This has certainly been our experience in Ohio.

Specifically, Invenergy seeks to operate three of the five solar projects (Hardin Solar 1 & 2, and Vinton Solar) eligible to receive a portion of OAQDA’s Solar Generation Fund. We had previously entered into commercial agreements with two Fortune 500 companies that enabled these projects to move forward. Over the last two years, our company and business partners relied on the OAQDA funding stream when negotiating different aspects of development and securing the necessary financing. At this time, construction for our Hardin Solar 2 project is underway and Hardin Solar 1 has completed construction—at its peak, Hardin Solar 1 employed 340 workers and, per the requirements of the PILOT agreement, 80 percent of those workers were Ohioans. The Hardin Solar Projects continue to enjoy robust support from the local community and we look forward to bringing them online.

We pursued Vinton Solar in response to an AEP RFP requesting energy projects to be developed in an Ohio Appalachian community. The facility is now fully permitted by OPSB. We are getting close to a Power Purchase Agreement (“PPA”) with a company seeking to purchase Vinton Solar’s output, but that contract hinges upon the Solar Generation Fund; previously negotiated contract terms (including pricing) would be significantly disrupted without the Fund’s revenue stream. Although we seek to finalize the transaction and move this project from permitting to construction, SB 118 jeopardizes development and puts the project at risk of not being built. The absence of Vinton Solar could have a detrimental impact on the local Vinton County community, which would not realize the significant introduction of construction jobs and anticipated capital investments—such as the nearly \$1 million in new annual revenue (including over \$450,000 for the Vinton County Local School District, the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College).

The 134th General Assembly already addressed HB 6 and the associated OAQDA program(s) this year via HB 128, which ultimately maintained the Solar Generation Fund. HB 128 recognized that a significant reversal in state policy like that contemplated by SB 118 could detract future business investments and overall development interest in Ohio. Thus, we urge this committee to remain steadfast in its commitment to our solar projects and to reject SB 118. Thank you for the opportunity to offer our perspective and we would be happy to discuss any questions at your convenience.

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