

House Public Utilities Committee
House Bill 118
Opposition Testimony of Miller City Mayor Jim Erford
March 23, 2021

Chairman Hoops and committee members, thank you for opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 118.

My name is Jim Erford. I was born and raised in Miller City and have been mayor since 2004. Miller City is a village in Putnam County in Northwest Ohio with a population of around 140 people. We are a tight-knit community and we take care of each other. I'm proud of my town.

I am a strong supporter of Avangrid Renewables' proposed 150 megawatt solar farm near Miller City. I don't have any personal financial interest in the project, but my town will greatly benefit from the Powell Creek solar farm. Miller City and other local governments in the area have negotiated a 20 year PILOT agreement for the project that will result in \$26 million dollars in revenue going to the county, two townships, two school districts, two emergency response agencies, several health and social services, and Miller City.

By far the biggest impact of the project, however, is that it will help Miller City build a new sanitary sewer. In fact, the sanitary sewer project is so important to our community that all project stakeholders—all entities in the PILOT agreement, project landowners and Avangrid—are pitching in a portion of their project revenue to help make it happen.

The sanitary sewer is such a big deal because it has limited our town's growth for several decades and impacts our future as well. Because we don't have a sanitary sewer system, you cannot build a new home in Miller City unless you get a permit from the county to use an existing septic system or have an acre lot and follow the rules of the county for installing a system for a new home in the country. This issue impacts businesses as well. We have a convenience store in town that has a holding tank for its restrooms which it has had pumped monthly for twenty years. We have had requests for a permit to install a car wash in town but the county will not permit it without a sanitary sewer.

Miller City got water in 2002 and since that time we have been trying to get a sanitary sewer. In 2012, with the help RCAP, we hired an engineering firm to do the preliminary engineering to install a sanitary system and determine what the cost would be. They came up with a cost of nearly \$200 per household per month for 30 years to pay off the debt which is not acceptable. With the support of the Powell Creek solar project our sanitary sewer will cost \$60 per household per month which is in line with other towns in the area charge for sewer service.

I'm here today to ask for your support for the Powell Creek solar project and oppose HB 118, which threatens not just the solar project but our entire town. Thank you for your consideration.