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Ohio Power Siting Board Public Hearing
April 11, 2023

Good evening, my name is Jane Harf and I am the Executive Director of Green Energy Ohio (GEO). Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of the Oak Run Solar Project under development by Savion in Madison County.

Green Energy Ohio (GEO) is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable energy policies, technologies, and practices through education, outreach, and advocacy. We represent a diverse constituency of individuals, businesses, community and government entities, and academic institutions who share GEO's vision of a clean energy future

The GEO Statement of Policy Positions endorses investment in utility-scale solar projects for the broad range of economic, environmental, and public health benefits that these facilities provide. First and foremost, local communities are the beneficiaries of these projects, through substantial Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) that support school districts, municipal services, and infrastructure.

In the case of Oak Run, it is estimated that Madison County would receive \$1.8 million annually, local schools would receive \$3.5 million, and other community services over \$1.5 million. These community services include first responders, libraries, and programs for veterans and seniors. Those of us living in small communities know too well how difficult it can be to pass levies that support the services that our residents depend on.

We frequently see state officials attempting to attract new companies to locate in Ohio and both state and local governments offering substantial incentives. Whereas these projects add to Ohio's commercial and industrial base, it is important to make some distinctions. We must keep in mind that solar farms do not generate large amounts of solid or hazardous waste; they do not draw on local water resources; they do not produce toxic air emissions; and they do not require significant amounts of power generation. In fact, they are contributing to the power supply without endangering public health and the environment.

Ohioans who live in rural areas value their surroundings and their lifestyle. Solar project developers like Savion respect that, and their projects present the least intrusive opportunity for community improvement and benefit. Evidence of their commitment to preserving the areas in which their projects are located can be found in the innovative "Between the Rows" program developed in conjunction with The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. By exploring "Agrivoltaics," they are developing best practices to cultivate crops alongside utility-scale solar generation, so that the acreage dedicated to the solar facility is not lost to crop production.

The need for clean affordable energy generated by large-scale solar facilities is constantly increasing, and Ohio is well positioned to take advantage of this growing economic sector.

Thank you for your time, and I appreciate your consideration of my remarks.