



Statewide Contact Information: P.O. Box 521 • Granville, Ohio 43023 • 614-902-2465 • www.GreenEnergyOhio.org

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To: Members of the Ohio Power Siting Board
From: Jane Harf, Executive Director, Green Energy Ohio

I am writing on behalf of Green Energy Ohio (GEO) in support of the proposed Mink Solar Project in Defiance and Paulding Counties, currently under development by Geenex. Green Energy Ohio is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable energy policies, technologies, and practices. For over two decades, GEO has educated the public and policy makers on the use and benefits of renewable resources and energy efficiency. We represent a diverse constituency of individuals, businesses, community and government entities, and academic institutions who share GEO's mission.

The GEO Statement of Policy Positions endorses investment in utility-scale solar projects for the broad range of economic and environmental advantages that these facilities provide. First and foremost, local communities are the financial beneficiaries of these projects, through substantial Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) that support public schools, local government services, and infrastructure improvements. Additional economic benefits come from access to local services and supply chains that accompany a project of this size and from lease payments to local landowners. Many Ohio landowners have testified that leases provide a level of security for maintaining their family farms in the face of pressures from residential and commercial development. The rural environment that residents value has been shown to be compatible with solar farms across the Midwest, more so than many other development projects of greater scope and disruption, and with less return to the local area.

Community outreach at the earliest stages of project development is essential. Geenex has made local connection a priority, becoming a member of chambers of commerce and economic development organizations, donating to local causes, and participating in special events. Through their website, newsletters, and local staff presence, they have made a concerted effort to provide useful information on the siting process and state requirements, as well as details of the project itself. These educational activities are consistent with GEO's goals of transparency and public engagement.

The need for renewable energy generated by large-scale solar farms is constantly increasing. The demand is being driven by residential consumers, small businesses, and municipal governments, all of whom are seeking a decrease in energy costs, greater sustainability, and reductions in their carbon footprint. That demand will grow even more as Ohio becomes a preferred location for distribution hubs, data centers, and new 21st century manufacturing. By adding new solar-generated power, the Mink Solar Project will serve these needs through a reliable, clean, and sustainable technology.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.