

**BEFORE
THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD**

In the Matter of the Application of Richwood)
Solar, LLC for a Certificate of Environmental)
Compatibility and Public Need to Construct a) Case No. 23-0930-EL-BGN
Solar-Powered Electric Generation Facility)

Direct Testimony of Mr. Bruce Beery

**On behalf of
Ms. Ashley Beery and Mr. Bruce Beery**

July 19, 2024

/s/ Jacob Elkin

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Mr. Bruce Beery*

1 **Q-1. Please state your name and home address.**

2 **A-1.** My name is Bruce Beery. My home address is 25934 Sandusky Road, Richwood, Ohio,
3 43344.

4
5 **Q-2. What is your occupational history?**

6 **A-2.** I started snow plowing in 1982, and I was a professional snow plower for Honda from
7 1990 until I retired in 2023. Before that, I ran B&L Maintenance, which I sold in the late
8 1990s. From 1977 to 1978, I worked as a mechanic and attendant for a Standard Oil of
9 Ohio gas station. I have also been a farmer since I was six-years old, when I began
10 farming with my father. I bought my first farm in 1978, one year after graduating high
11 school. In addition to growing crops, I have raised hogs and cattle at various points in
12 time.

13
14 **Q-3. Can you describe your and your family's connection to Union County agriculture?**

15 **A-3.** I grew up on my father's farm in Union County. He had worked hard for the farm all of
16 his life and bought it as an investment. Growing up working on his farm instilled in me a
17 strong work ethic. I wanted a farm of my own, but my father did not simply leave me his
18 land. Instead, I had to earn it, and I eventually purchased the land from him with money I
19 had made working several jobs while farming. After getting married, my wife and I lived
20 frugally and continued to work hard so that I could invest in more farmland. I raised my
21 daughter Ashley in Union County, and she carried on the tradition of buying her own
22 farmland once she was able. Throughout my life, I have tried to give back to the

1 community, including by donating my farmer of the year winnings to the Northern Union
2 County Emergency Services.

3
4 I have also had to make many sacrifices for my farm, including missing family functions
5 and skipping out on a honeymoon due to having to keep up with the farm. This work has
6 taken a heavy physical toll, but I have done the work in order to provide for my family
7 and because I believed that the work would pay off in retirement.

8

9 **Q-4. What is the nature of your involvement in the project?**

10 **A-4.** I have agreed to lease 1,077 acres of my farmland to Samsung for the Richwood Solar
11 project. All of these acres are currently being used for corn. In the past, they were used
12 for growing soybeans. I also live within the planned project site, and all four sides of my
13 home are directly adjacent to land where the solar panels will be located.

14

15 **Q-5. Can you describe your decision to participate in the project?**

16 **A-5.** Much like my decision to purchase farmland in the first place, I decided to participate in
17 the Richwood Solar project because it is an investment. It is an investment in my farm
18 because it will allow us to return the ground to farming once the lease term has ended,
19 thanks to the strong drain tile and soil protections in the lease. It is an investment in my
20 family because it will allow us to earn a steady income, and it will provide for my needs
21 and my wife's needs through retirement. And it is an investment in our community,
22 because it will preserve farmland for future generations—preventing the land from being

1 converted to housing or other permanent forms of development—while generating energy
2 for Ohio.

3
4 I firmly believe that it is my right as a land owner to lease my land for this project. I have
5 never told my neighbors what they could or couldn't put on their land. It is my right to
6 farm the land I own if I so choose, and it should be my right to lease my land for
7 Richwood Solar.

8

9 **Q-6. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

10 **A-6.** I am testifying in support of the Richwood Solar Project. I am doing so because the
11 project is the right choice for my family's farmland and for us, the landowners.

12

13 **Q-7. Can you describe in more detail why the project is the right choice for you and your
14 farmland?**

15 **A-7.** Like my father before me, I have always been a steward of my land. As a steward of the
16 land, I believe that the Richwood Solar project is the right choice for it because it will
17 provide a productive use of the land in the form of harvesting solar energy, while
18 preserving the soil for future Union County farmers.

19

20 Without this project, our farms will likely be lost forever because the current agricultural
21 use of the land is not providing sufficient income. I am retiring from farming because of
22 my age and declining health. My wife's health is also deteriorating, as is our daughter
23 Ashley's. Farming the land has also become more dangerous recently due to increased

1 traffic, and I can no longer take my equipment down certain roads due to residential
2 development on both sides of narrow country roads. Despite our family's long farming
3 history, farming simply can no longer support us financially, and any other possible use
4 of our land—such as selling it for residential development—would be worse for the land
5 and soil in the long term.

6
7 I also know first-hand that other forms of development are the true threat to farmland in
8 Union County, but many of the people who now claim to be opposed to using farmland
9 for solar energy have had no issue with converting farmland to housing. I used to rent and
10 farm the land along Langstaff Road in Richwood. Eventually, the owner of the land
11 passed away and the land was sold to a housing developer. Now, that land has been
12 subdivided and developed into houses. In fact, the registered address of Citizens Against
13 Richwood Solar is a house that was built on the farmland that I used to rent on Langstaff
14 Road. That land will likely never be farmed again, but if Richwood Solar is approved, our
15 land will be able to be farmed after the lease term expires.

16
17 **Q-8. Does this conclude your testimony?**

18 **A-8.** Yes. However, I reserve the right to update this testimony to respond to any further
19 testimony in this case.

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Summary: Testimony of Bruce Beery electronically filed by Mr. Jacob Elkin on behalf of Beery, Ashley and Beery, Bruce.