

January 30, 2023

Kentucky State Board on Electric Generation and Transmission Siting

P.O. Box 615, 211 Sower Blvd.

Frankfort, KY 40602-0615

RECEIVED

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PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION

CASE# 2022-00115

Greetings,

I am a resident of Hart County for 66 years, have a B.S. Degree in Agriculture, WKU, a M.A. Degree in Education, WKU, and a retired former business owner in Munfordville. For the past 30 years I have represented Hart County and the membership of Farmers RECC, our local electric distribution cooperative, on their board of directors where I presently serve as Board Chairman. I am a former director (10 years) and past board chairman (5 years) of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, one of the G&T's that supplies electricity to rural Kentuckians. I also served as a board member and Treasurer of ACES Power Marketing in Carmel Indiana for 8 years. This company assists G&T's across the United States marketing their power in the current power markets.

Leeward Energy, Thoroughbred Solar LLC is wanting to locate and develop 50 MW solar facility in rural Hart County and will lease about 530 acres of prime farmland from three (3) land owners at an estimated cost of about \$318,000. We know that Thoroughbred Solar filed a motion with the PSC on Dec. 5, 2022 to keep confidential certain information concerning the lease prices being offered and paid to the three land owners. However, adjacent land owners who denied the attempt to lease their land for this project were offered \$600 per acre per year on a 30 year lease once the project gained approval. A much smaller amount was offered as a placeholder to see if the project gets approval.

One of the reasons Leeward Energy and Thoroughbred Solar chose this location is because of the access to a 345 KV transmission line owned by

East Kentucky Power which crosses the property in question. East Kentucky Power has membership in the PJM Power Market and this will allow the solar company the ability to sell the electricity that is generated at this site into the PJM Power Market. According to documents filed by Thoroughbred Solar they have not secured a Purchase Power Agreement with anyone yet. East Kentucky Power will be paid for the transmission access by Thoroughbred Solar. However, there will be no direct benefit to the end use consumers in Hart County due to the nature of the power being produced. FARMERS RECC has an all requirements power purchase agreement with East Kentucky Power and cannot purchase the output of this location even if they wanted to. The Public Service Commission granted EKP approval to join the PJM Power market about 10 years ago to offer price stability to the end user. In the event one of the base load assets at EKP is down for repairs or not functioning properly, the company can buy power from the market. If the cost of market power is less than what EKP can generate it for, they can buy from the market. The only other G&T in the state that is linked to a power market is Big Rivers which delivers power in the MISO market. LGE, KU, TVA and Kentucky Power are not in power markets and would require a predetermined priced PPA (Purchased Power Agreement), therefore this is another reason Leeward Energy chose this location. If they could have obtained a PPA from another entity perhaps another location would have been chosen.

Another reason Hart County was chosen is because there is no zoning & planning commission in the county to have to deal with. Our neighboring county to the north has a planning and zoning commission and has denied two solar projects in their county in the last two years. On January 19, 2022 Hardin Solar LLC, a Community Energy subsidiary, was denied a permit for an 868 acre solar project near Cecilia. On June 15, 2021 the planning and zoning commission denied a conditional use permit for 1072 acres to Rhudes Creek Solar LLC and ibV Energy Partners LLC.. Some of the reasons given were (1) the solar company will not be around for the life of the project because these deals are bought and sold to maximize the profits to the developing entity,(2) the valuation of adjacent homeowners and farm owners land will greatly be reduced, (3) prime farmland will be

taken out of production, (4) the beauty of the County would be irreversibly damaged, (5) Drinking water and underground streams would be affected by the erosion, (6) wildlife habitat would be affected by the fencing barriers, heat and noise from these facilities. Westbridge Renewable Energy Corporation states in a blog dated September 25, 2021 "Living next to a solar farm may have some downsides, including local habitat disruption, reduced farmland in poor views, and potential electromagnetic waves from solar batteries." Hardin County has said NO twice in the last two years to similar projects. Because we have no planning and zoning commission Thoroughbred Solar only has to meet the setback requirement offered by KRS statute 278.706.(2)(e) which establishes that ALL proposed structures or facilities used for the production of electricity be two thousand (2000) feet from any residential neighborhood. However, they cannot meet the requirements in this statute and have filed a motion for deviation from this setback requirement.

I would ask the siting board to consider the welfare of all the citizens of Hart County and not just 3. Thoroughbred Solar has tried to buy the support of the citizens of Hart County by making significant donations to the Imagination Library program in Hart County, the Hart County Fair Board, The Hart County Cattlemen's Association, and the Hart County Historical Society. This was money spent to quiet the opposition to this project in Hart County. You can view their Facebook page that was established last April and see everything they have spent money for is touted with a Thoroughbred Solar Tag line.

I ask the siting board to look at the comments made by concerned citizens on Thoroughbred Solar Facebook page. Most Hart County citizens can see through the smoke screen that has been deployed by Thoroughbred Solar on social media. A few of the comments made about the posts were "Much more expensive and depends on the weather. Sounds just like something the government would set up. Rolling blackouts here we come." Another said, "I don't support solar when it takes over farmland in good growing regions. States with good rainfall and good land should be growing food." Another comment, "No Thanks It will be a huge eye sore on both

sides of the road and we will reap no benefits and most likely lower our property values.”

Let's talk about the critical minerals needed for energy transition to solar. Copper, Silicon and Molybdenum. None of these minerals are currently mined in the US. To transition to solar, we have to rely on China and other foreign nations. Is this good domestic policy?

Another point, currently in the US there is only one state (Washington) that has the capability to safely recycle solar panels. In 30 years what are Hart Countians supposed to do with the worn out, depleted solar panels. I don't want to shift that responsibility to my grandchildren.

I attended a public forum on this solar project sponsored by the Hart County Chamber of Commerce a few months ago. No matter what the question from a concerned citizen was, the answer given by Thoroughbred Solar was what they thought you wanted to hear whether accurate or not.

What no one knows for sure is what this project will do to the ecology of our karst region in Hart County. Will it affect the caves nearby? Who knows with certainty what will happen. Think about the Corvette Museum in Bowling Green. They had a geologic study prior to construction of the museum and had no idea a sinkhole would collapse and cost millions of dollars to repair. Luckily, no one was injured.

Will it affect Green River and the millions of dollars spent to preserve the ecology of this natural resource? One of the land owners who will benefit from this project received thousands of dollars from USDA over a period of 15 years to protect the watershed of Green River through the CREP program. That program is no longer funded by USDA. If this project gains approval the investment made to one of the landowners of this project will be forever wasted. Who knows what the runoff and erosion will do to the river? The accumulated water from this site will go somewhere.

I just attended a conference in Lexington sponsored by the National Cooperative Finance Corporation in conjunction with The Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives and East Kentucky Power for directors

and CEO's of the state's electric cooperatives. All of you remember the news around December 23 & 24, 2022 about the possibility of rolling blackouts in our area due to the demand for electricity in our area. Some areas of the state had to implement rolling blackouts while the outside temperature was at its lowest. Winter Storm Elliot reminded everyone how important it is to have base load electric generation available. During these two days, the demand for electricity was the highest for Farmers RECC and EKPC they have ever had since their beginning. NOT ONE KILOWATT HOUR OF SOLAR ENERGY WAS AVAILABLE IN THE ENTIRE PJM MARKET FOOTPRINT (13 states and DC) during these two critical days.

Do you really want to allow a pension fund in Canada, a renewable energy company in Texas, and a law firm in Columbus, Ohio to dictate the future landscape of Hart County, while raping the land and exporting millions of dollars out of Hart County? If it were not for federal tax credits, easy access to transmission lines and the absence of planning and zoning, I seriously doubt this siting would be necessary.

We need to stop chasing a dream and talk about reality!!! More people will be harmed than benefited by this project. Personally, I would hate to see a permanent scar in the community that is totally avoidable. If this project is approved there won't be any do overs. Like politicians, it is easy to make promises before the election and win votes by their ability to persuade the voter to believe them. We will have to live with this project and what it does to our county no matter what was promised.

If we will wait for new technology, baseload production such as being developed in partnership by General Electric and Hitachi, which will only require 6.7 acres of secured protected area and will generate 300 MW's of power will become available in the US soon. This technology will go online in Ontario in 2028.

From my youth I was taught by my parents and elders, "If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is." The picture painted by LeeWard Energy and Thoroughbred Solar makes it all appear it would be a

great thing for Hart County to have a large scale solar farm. I think their story sounds "too good to be true." I implore the siting board to say NO!!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul C. Hawkins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Paul C. Hawkins

Paul C. & Cathy W. Hawkins

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