

1  
2  
3 **BEFORE THE**  
4 **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN**  
5

---

6  
7  
8 Application for a Certificate of Public  
9 Convenience and Necessity of Grant County  
10 Solar, LLC to Construct a Solar Generation  
11 Facility, to be Located in Grant County,  
12 Wisconsin.  
13  
14

---

Docket No. 9804-CE-100

15 **DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ROSS REYNOLDS**  
16  
17 **GRANT COUNTY INTERVENORS**  
18  
19

---

20  
21 **Q: Please state your name and address and summarize your concerns:**

22 A: My name is Ross Reynolds, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of my  
23 family. My wife, four sons, and I reside at 7795 Hwy 61 in Lancaster, Wisconsin. The  
24 farm we own and live on is one mile north of the proposed solar project. We are also co-  
25 owners of a production farming operation based ½ mile on the west and 1 mile on the  
26 northern border of the proposed solar project. My wife and I, as well as our 4 young  
27 sons, are all passionate about production agriculture and the life we live off the land here  
28 in Grant County, specifically here in the Potosi area, which now ground zero for a large  
29 scale solar project.

30 We have many concerns, shared with our neighbors, including water run off and  
31 land use. Permanent undisturbed vegetation is native to our prairie soils here as that's  
32 how they were hundreds of years ago. In more recent decades, the land is farmed and  
33 pastured. Our area, most specifically the solar proposed site, is some of the best ag use

1 land in the state and arguably the Midwest. Taking land out of production and making it  
2 home to 750,000 solar panels seems anything but fitting for this great land. Runoff from  
3 these panels could be a huge issue as glass panels, much like a paved parking lot, will not  
4 infiltrate rain water. Run off will do just that, it will run off, at a fast speed and in large  
5 volume. Property values are also a major concern as the scenic rolling hills we live and  
6 work in will be littered with chain link fencing and rows upon rows of solar panels. Such  
7 panels and projects have been known to cause a heat island effect or changes in  
8 temperatures around or near these projects. This is of large concern as field temperatures  
9 of crops are very sensitive during pollination and reproductive phases. At 88 degrees  
10 pollen in corn fields will start to become not viable to fertilize silks and make kernels.  
11 With this heat island affect said to be around 7 degrees it could have a significant effect  
12 on these crops. We see mid-summer temps at or above 88 enough without the help of any  
13 un needed artificial heat from a nearby solar project. We live in an area that in recent  
14 years has seen relentless and repeated damage from heavy winds and storms. These  
15 panels are said to be designed to withstand this. Also designed to withstand the storms  
16 have been the countless buildings and homes destroyed or damaged by these recent  
17 storms. Who is held responsible if these panels are blown on to others properties?  
18 Cleanup? Damage? Injuries? Company officials have been anything but transparent with  
19 local residents, quite the opposite in fact. Every question or concern that has been  
20 answered by company officials seems intentionally vague and is answered in more of a  
21 way to protect liability of the company than to ease concerns of a resident.  
22 Decommissioning recycling and disposal of a massive project such as this is hard to  
23 imagine. Project leaders are struggling to grasp it as well. Simply by dividing the

1 number of panels in this project by the man hours set aside to remove them shows that the  
2 decommissioning job is being far underestimated.

3 This solar project will cause individual hardships for many in this community.  
4 Who will want to live here around this project? What is one reason a person would have  
5 for wanting to be near this project or see this project aside from financial compensation.  
6 A few stand to benefit from the direct income of the project but many have to deal with  
7 the local impact of business and land values. I know of multiple families living near the  
8 project that are making plans to move should this project go through. How fair is this for  
9 people not involved in the project.

10 That is evident in the “good neighbor agreements.” The good neighbor payments  
11 are anything but what the name implies. If this project is so positive then why is the  
12 company going to such great lengths to make sure our questions are not answered? To  
13 make sure there are not public meetings? It seems the company feels it cheaper or more  
14 efficient to pay people a yearly amount to waive all rights than deal with any problems  
15 that may arise due to their project.

16 The proposed solar project is having negative effects on our business as it aims to  
17 take ag land and turn it to a nearly permanent commercial solar field. Using government  
18 incentives the values being paid for this land are 2-3 times the value that local farmers  
19 can pay to farm the land. This push for low to no carbon is understandable and changes  
20 need to be made to sustain our future as a country. However, taking huge amounts of  
21 prime ag use land has a large negative foot print of its own. There are many places where  
22 solar can be used with great benefit without taking such a great resource from local  
23 business people. Roof tops, parking lots, or land with less production potential are all

1 great candidates. If projects like this continue to pop up and expand across our landscape  
2 what future can we provide to young ag producers of the next generation like my 4 boys?

3 **Q: Do you have concerns about the impact of agricultural land sitting uncultivated for**  
4 **30-50 years?**

5 A: Soils with native vegetation can absolutely sit uncultivated for the time frame  
6 described above. These are prairie soils and that is how they were years ago. However,  
7 how do we keep or establish native vegetation when a significant portion of sunlight and  
8 rain are blocked by glass panels. The project claims are that the land is un affected and  
9 the panels are somehow placed among vegetation with no negative effect. How is this  
10 possible? If the project is in effect harvesting sunlight we need to keep in mind that is  
11 what native plants are doing as well. How do we establish and maintain this vegetation  
12 under panels. If not established and maintained how we keep local pest weeds out like  
13 water hemp and palmer amaranth.

14 **Q: Do you have concerns about water issues due to installation of the project?**

15 A: Yes. When rain hits the ground it attempts to infiltrate every square inch. It is  
16 much more effective for example on a grass field than a paved parking lot. That same  
17 thought process can be taken from a solar field. The same amount of rain will fall on that  
18 as any other neighboring parcel of land. However, the rain that hits the panels will not  
19 infiltrate, it will run off. In the running off process it will gain speed. That water will  
20 eventually be allowed or directed to hit the ground. The problem is that the portion of the  
21 ground that water hits will be much smaller from a surface area standpoint than the panel  
22 that collected that water. Think of it like a house roof draining water through an eave  
23 spout. The water is now at a larger concentration and a greater speed than what is would

1 have been had it hit native vegetation naturally. This is where my concerns are when  
2 talking about run off. When we change the speed and volume of rain water it becomes  
3 very hard to manage. We own and lease farmland that will be downstream from the solar  
4 project. Why should it be our burden to deal with rain water problems that may stem  
5 from the project? Who is responsible for this?

6 **Q: Are storms and high winds a concern?**

7 A: Wind readings from the storm this summer were measured in excess of 100 miles  
8 an hour. Millions of dollars of damage were realized in a circumference of just a mile  
9 outside of the proposed project. That just this year mind you, we have had multiple  
10 events in recent years that would add to that damage total greatly. Wind readings from  
11 the companies met station need to be compared with the neighboring airport as well.  
12 Allowing these companies to filter their own data is going to skew results. What was the  
13 wind reading from the met station during our summer storms?? The solar project has not  
14 explained how it will guarantee that panels and assemblies can withstand these high  
15 winds.

16 **Q: Does this conclude your testimony?**

17 A: Yes, it does.