

Chair Wendzel, Members of the House Energy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you again. My name is Clara Ostrander, and I live in Milan Township in Monroe County, Michigan. Our family owns two centennial farmsteads, including the home I live in, which has been in our family for over 150 years.

Last time I came before this committee, I shared my story of growing up on a working farm, seeing my dad forced to sell some of our land to pay for my mom's medical bills, and now facing tough decisions alongside my husband as we deal with our own medical challenges. Hosting a solar project offers our family a way forward. It means a chance to preserve our land for future generations while contributing towards American energy independence in the same way farmers do when hosting an oil or gas well or growing corn for ethanol.

I'm here today because PA 233 protects the land rights of farm families like mine, and it shouldn't be undone before it's even had a chance to work.

Public Act 233 was enacted at the end of 2024, and for families like mine, it brought hope. After years of uncertainty and unreasonable local regulations, we finally had a path forward. For the first time, it felt like our property rights were being respected and that we might be able to keep our land, support our family, and make something lasting out of this opportunity.

This isn't about taking power away from local communities. It's about giving families like mine a fair process when local politics stop working. The good news is that the local process is working in many communities across Michigan. Communities in Branch County, Montcalm County, and many others have approved new solar projects under compatible renewable energy ordinances, with landowners, developers, and township governments working together to design projects that fit the community.

Because stakeholders are coming together, the Michigan Public Service Commission hasn't had the chance to consider an application under this new process. Townships across the state have the opportunity to permit these projects. In our case, our township took that opportunity away, but if people are willing to work together in good faith, townships can create fair, thoughtful ordinances that reflect local values while still allowing renewable energy projects to move forward.

This law has been a light at the end of the tunnel for our family and many others. It gives us a fair shot, something we hadn't had in years in our township. We're not asking for a rubber stamp, just a fair hearing for our project before the MPSC. We won't get that in our township.

Repealing the law wouldn't just stall a process. It takes that hope away. It sends a message to families like mine that our voices, our choices, and our futures don't matter. That's not right, not

for agriculture in Michigan and not for landowners who simply want to keep working their land in a way that makes sense for them.

Like many landowners, we've had other offers to sell the land to developers, but we want to keep the farm in the family and harvest a new crop in a new way that honors our past and secures our future. Without PA 233 and the oversight of the Public Service Commission, that path is effectively closed.

I urge you to give the new process the time it needs to work. Let the Public Service Commission do its job. Don't take this opportunity away from farm families like mine before we've had the opportunity to make it work.

Thank you.

Clara Ostrander

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