



**Richland County Citizens
for Property Rights
& Job Development**

September 05, 2025

For immediate release:

CITIZENS' GROUP PETITION DRIVE SUCCESSFUL

MANSFIELD – The Richland County Board of Elections met Wednesday to consider the petition of the Richland County Citizens for Property Rights and Job Development calling for a referendum on the Richland County Commissioners' July 17 resolution to ban economically significant solar and wind projects in most of the county. The Board certified that the petitioners had gathered the number of signatures required to put the resolution on the 2026 Primary ballot for county voters to approve or repeal.

Brian McPeek, Co-chair of the group and head of IBEW Local 688, said it was a victory for the people of Richland County. "Demand for energy is only going to grow in the future. The Commissioners' ban shortchanges the county and property owners, preventing us from even looking at what these projects might bring to the county, from jobs to cheaper energy to millions of dollars in revenue for the county."

Christina O'Millian, Co-chair and treasurer of the Property Rights and Job Development group, said it was an incredible effort by a very determined group of people. "Over 100 people circulated the petition throughout the county and in three weeks gathered over 4300 signatures," she said. "The people signed for a variety of reasons. Some believed it violated the property rights of individuals. Others believed in the need for more renewable energy sources, and many found it made no sense to ban projects before even looking at them."

Adriana Miranda, Communications Chair for the group, said that they also learned that "there is a lot of misinformation out there about solar and wind projects. So, a big part of our campaign next spring will be education."

The Commissioners' resolution was the result of Ohio Senate Bill 52, passed in 2021, which gave county commissioners the power to ban solar and wind projects larger than 50 Megawatts in output. SB 52 though, also gave citizens the right to petition for a county-wide referendum on the resolution. It



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required petitioners to gather signatures of county voters equal to 8% of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election within 30 days of the resolution passing.

On August 18, the citizens group presented their petition for a referendum with 4300 plus signatures to the Commissioners. The Board of Elections only found 3380 signatures to be valid but that was still more than the 3320 that SB 52 required.

John Makley, who helped organize the petition drive, said he understands concerns about prime agricultural land being taken for these projects and the worry that the companies behind them are disreputable, but he wants voters to know that even if the ban is overturned next spring, Commissioners will still possess veto power over these projects. SB 52 provides for that. Any company wanting to put a large scale solar or wind project in the county will still have to get the approval of the Commissioners in order to proceed. “At least then,” Makley said, “they’ll have to look at each project individually and decide whether it’s good or bad for Richland County. And that is all we’re asking for.”

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