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NOTE: This Public Participation Form must be presented to the County Clerk prior to the time the agenda item(s) you wish to address are discussed before the Court.

**BROWN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM**

Instructions: Fill out all appropriate blanks. Please print or write legibly.

NAME:

John E. Davis DATE: 2/8/2021

ADDRESS: 10500 E. Hwy 190
Menard, TX 76859

TELEPHONE:

281-794-8663

Do you represent any particular group or organization? Yes No (Circle One)

If you do represent a group or organization, please state the name, address and telephone number of such group or organization.

Pecan Spring Ranch
10500 E. Hwy 190
Menard, TX 76859

Which agenda item(s) do you wish to address?

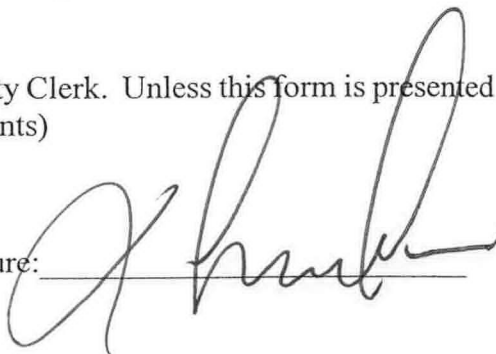
Public Comment AND Public Hearing

I am aware that my comments must be limited to the issues relating to the above referenced agenda item(s), and that I will be limited to five (5) minutes for my comments, subject to the discretion of the Court to allow me more time.

I am aware all speakers are required to adhere to the rules of procedure, conduct and decorum adopted by the Court on August 19, 2019.

(Upon completion of this form, please present it to the County Clerk. Unless this form is presented to the County Clerk, you may not be recognized for comments)

February 8, 2021
Exhibit #4)

Signature: 



Comments by John Davis
Brown County Commissioners Court
February 8, 2021

Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you all today. My name is John Davis and I'm proud to say I'm an "energy rancher" from Menard, Texas. My ranch is a little over an hour southwest from here. I'm also a member of the Advisory Board of Conservative Texans for Energy Innovation, a group of Texans that advocates for an "all of the above" approach to energy with a focus on free-market competition.

As conservatives, we want to ensure our energy policies aren't driven by a desire to control our behavior – such as telling you what kind of truck you can or can't drive or forcing you to buy a certain kind of energy - but by a desire to grow our economy free from government intrusion and intervention. One of our foundational principles is a strong defense of private property rights. They are vital and deeply embedded in the history and culture of Texas.

I think I bring a unique perspective for your consideration for 2 reasons: First, in addition to being a rancher, I'm also a former Republican member of the Texas Legislature. I had the privilege and honor of serving in the Texas House of Representatives for 16 years. I'm telling you all this because for 4 of those years, I served as the Chairman of the House Economic and Small Business Development Committee. Our job was to ensure that the Texas business climate was second to none and that opportunities abounded for those who were willing to work hard, invest and grow their businesses.

Secondly, I'm proud to tell you that I was a co-author of the original legislation that created the Chapter 312 & 313 tax abatement program back in 2001. The financial benefits of the Radian Solar Project are laid out before you and you should carefully consider them. As fiduciaries of taxpayer dollars, you all will decide what is in the best interest of your constituents. The bottom line is that the project either works for your community financially from Day 1 or it doesn't.

I'm not here to try and convince you which way to vote. But for those of you who may believe the company is coming without the abatement, I'd like to strongly disavow you of this notion and ask you to learn from the mistakes made by some rural communities across Texas.

Recently, the Ganado ISD School Board in Jackson County turned down a \$500 million project very similar to the one before you. In doing so, they turned down millions of dollars that would have directly benefited 741 local school kids. The project went elsewhere to a community that wanted economic development and local investment.

I've been in your position, where I've listened to hours of testimony and taken numerous phone calls in advance of tough votes. One thing I've learned is that sometimes, the loudest voices and fiercest opponents don't necessarily represent a widespread view. I would encourage you to resist the temptation to surrender to fear and misinformation. Get the facts, not the fear. But make no mistake about it, the company will go elsewhere.

I'd like to share with you a personal story of how a similar project just 2 counties over helped to save my family's ranch. I'm a 6th generation Texan and I've been entrusted with my family's legacy ranch in Menard County that I mentioned earlier. It's called Pecan Spring Ranch and it was founded by my great-great grandparents in 1880 who emigrated from Germany in search of a better life. Over time, Pecan Spring Ranch has developed a strong reputation for quality cattle, sheep, and goats. These products are sold directly to consumers at Farmers Markets all across Texas. Our family is very proud of the designation of Pecan Spring Ranch as a "Texas Century Ranch", having been owned and operated by the same family for over 100 years.

Three years ago, my family partnered with a wind energy company to provide ranch acreage for a part of the Cactus Flats Wind Farm, a project that generates 148 megawatts of wind power and provides power to a variety of customers including the GM vehicle assembly plant in Arlington, Texas. And this project is likely the largest single taxpayer to the Eden Independent School District in nearby Concho County.

As a result of this partnership, financial resources from that project are providing the working capital for the operations and maintenance of our ranching business. Additionally, thanks to the revenue from the project, my wife and I have begun restoration work on many of the ranch's historical structures. I'm thrilled that my children (and hopefully my grandchildren) are partners in preserving our family's legacy.

Sadly, there are many rural Texans who are not as fortunate as we are. They have been forced to sell off part or all of their family's history ... just to get by. Not every Texas county is blessed with oil or family wealth. These renewable projects enable more rural Texans an opportunity to protect and preserve their way of life.

In Texas, private property rights are important to landowners. I feel comfortable in telling you and anyone who will listen that, as a responsible landowner, I am the best steward of my family's ranching legacy. There is no one better positioned than me to decide what is in the best interest of my family and our ability to continue our tradition.

From my personal experience, I can confirm that our partnership with renewable energy was a "win-win". And I hope it will be with Brown County as well. Thank you for your time and for your public service.