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May 26, 2022

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION ISSUES INFORMAL ADVISORY OPINION**

At its meeting on May 20, 2022, the Ohio Ethics Commission approved an [Informal Advisory Opinion](#) regarding a potential donation to a township and village.

The opinion was issued to the Licking County Prosecutor's Office on behalf of a township board of trustees and addresses the question of whether a company building a solar-powered electric generation facility in the township and an adjacent village could donate money to the two public entities. The donation would be provided for potential expenses associated with the project, including any incurred by the respective fire departments for necessary equipment and training.

The opinion notes that although the township and village do not have decision-making authority regarding the location or construction of the facility, both entities have intervened with the Power Siting Board to ensure safety and infrastructure concerns would be addressed. Nonetheless, the Commission concluded that the township and village are not prohibited from accepting the donations that are reasonably required to equip and train local emergency responders.

"The Ethics Law prohibits people in public service from improperly soliciting or accepting substantial things of value," stated Executive Director Paul Nick. "The Commission determined that the donations by solar power company would not have an improper influence upon any public officials because the donation is directed to the township and village as a whole and not to any individual or group of individuals."

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