

Statement by Diane Brenner, Dr.P.H., Worthington Board of Health regarding the proposed Blue Wave agrivoltaic installation at 190 Ridge Road.

Though not unexpected, the fact that the AG's office rejected three moratoriums passed nearly unanimously by Worthington Town Meeting on the basis that they failed to demonstrate health and safety concerns is, at best, disingenuous; at worst, discriminatory. This disregard for the will of the people is built in to a process predesigned to benefit the applicant corporations and those land owners who have chosen to conduct their farming activities under the canopy of large solar panels -- in the case of the 190 Ridge Road project, over 6000 of them.

The AG notes that switching to solar power has made sense in a world polluted by the use of fossil fuels since at least 1985, and many of us agree; however, only recently have incentives been embraced by the Commonwealth to encourage industrial-scale corporate installations on productive farmland. In Worthington, as in other rural Western Massachusetts communities, there has been growing awareness that this effort focuses on technological gain at the expense of quality of life, including potential negative health and safety impacts. These large-scale installations have not been around long enough to evaluate what these impacts could be, which makes the evaluation process particularly frustrating for a BOH, mandated by state law to protect, preserve, and promote the public and environmental health of local residents.

Blue Wave has scrupulously adhered to the letter of laws that either have been specifically designed to benefit them or were initially designed for situations that are very different from those proposed here (e.g., existing electrical codes and OSHA sound standards). This approach treats the concerns voiced by many Worthington residents as either unprovable or irrelevant. Particularly challenging is demonstrating risks specific to the 190 Ridge Road parcel that may occur in the future; that relate not so much to the initial construction -- which Blue Wave has covered in detail -- but to long-term operation and maintenance about which they are frustratingly vague. These concerns are outlined in the Worthington Board of Health 6/12/2026 submission to the Planning Board -- a response to Blue Wave's May 19th reply to concerns submitted by the BOH to the Planning Board on December 31, 2025. They include ground water contamination, air pollution, noise pollution, accidents and injuries, concerns about interim repairs and associated waste disposal, concerns about flooding that could damage septic systems and private wells; and the possibilities of health impacts from noise and insects that could affect vulnerable populations living in the area or enjoying nearby recreational activities. The Worthington Board of Health feels that these health concerns have not been given adequate scrutiny and that mechanisms have

not been put in place that could effectively address health issues that could emerge over the intended 10-20 life span of the project. We respectfully submit the 6/12/2026 Worthington Board of Health response to the Planning Board for inclusion in the public record.