

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

Approved at Board of Heath Meeting, July 10, 2026

The Attorney General's rejection of the three moratoria passed by Worthington Town Meeting on the basis that they failed to demonstrate health and safety concerns is fundamentally a Catch-22. No one knows how agrivoltaics will impact human health, so there is no way health or safety concerns can be documented at this time.

Industrial-scaled solar installations have not been around long enough to evaluate what these impacts could be, which makes the evaluation process particularly frustrating for a Board of Health, mandated by state law to protect, preserve, and promote the public and environmental health of local residents.

The AG notes that switching to solar power makes sense in a world polluted by fossil fuels, and many of us agree; however, the Commonwealth has only recently embraced incentives to encourage industrial-scale solar installations on productive farmland. The focus has been on technological gain at the expense of quality of life

An important function of local Boards of Health involves prevention – that is why we permit wells and septic systems, make sure restaurants are clean; that housing meets minimum standards. We have had generations of experience with these. Not so for agrivoltaics. Nonetheless, based on common sense and experience from other contexts, it IS possible to recognize areas where negative health impacts from these industrial installations could occur. We have listed these elsewhere, but, to repeat, they include fire hazards, ground water contamination, air pollution, noise pollution, accidents and injuries, interim waste disposal issues, concerns about flooding that could damage septic systems and private wells, and ecosystem alterations that could increase soil acidity and mosquito or tick populations. We would also add the more subtle impacts on mental health and on recreational activities that are widely viewed as promoters of good health.

BlueWave has provided enormous detail about their construction plans and process; but they are frustratingly vague about long-term operation and maintenance. This vagueness becomes understandable when we recognize that BlueWave is still a novice at long-term

operation. While BlueWave appears to have the staffing, financing, legal expertise, and state support needed to initiate and build agrivoltaic projects, **the company's operational capability over the long-term remains a major BOH concern.**

The field of agrivoltaics is very young and operational experience is in its infancy. The progenitor is Silicon Ranch of Nashville, Tenn. Owned by a consortium of institutional investors, it operates a massive site in Houston County, Georgia. It was commissioned in December 2019, only 6 years ago. There are now over 600 agrivoltaic facilities throughout United States, the majority of them considered "mid-scale," producing 1-5 MW of power. The first of these, Jack's Solar Garden in Longmont, Colorado, became operational in 2020 as well. Most are much younger. While some data on agricultural health is routinely collected, e.g., soil conditions, health of grazing animals, water retention levels; data related to human health is much more limited and tends to focus on the occupational health risks faced by the workers who build these facilities, and on farms that use workers for harvesting.

To date, BlueWave has had only 2-3 years operational experience based on five sites. Another 8-10 facilities are being built or are close to the end of the permitting process. And, according to a report from 2025, their pipeline is expanding rapidly, an anticipated 80 possible projects in 13 states. Each one of these installations will require long-term operational and maintenance support for an as yet underdetermined amount of time, but anticipated in the range of 20-30 years for the panels. **We are, in Worthington, guinea pigs; part of a long-term environmental experiment.**

The Worthington Board of Health asks that the following items be addressed and added to any conditions prior to beginning operations.

(1) BlueWave might be sold by its parent company, Axiom. If this happens, or BlueWave's corporate mandate legally changes, clarify how the farming obligations, maintenance standards, and community commitments are to be preserved for the remaining life of the project.

(2) Institute a requirement to contact the BOH immediately (within 24 hours or sooner) should a health or environmental complaint be lodged through BlueWave. Provide documentation, at least every six months, identifying whether there have or haven't been any health, safety, or environmental complaints during the previous period, and if any, how they were resolved and/or their status.

(3) Provide the name of the BlueWave contact (or, if that's not possible, the named position) should someone make a complaint to the Board of Health. Provide evidence that this person has been trained to understand, address, and document health and safety related issues and that they understand the requirement to need to work in concert with the Worthington Board of Health.

(4) Include the Worthington Board of Health among the recipients of all inspection reports.

(5) Prior to beginning operations, spell out the following;

(a) How will noise be measured if residents complain? Who performs and pays for testing? What corrective actions are available?

(b) How will concerns about well pollution be handled? Who performs and pays for testing? What chemicals are included in test protocols? What corrective actions are available and again, who supervises and who pays?

(c) How will concerns about septic system flooding be handled? Who pays for an investigation? Who is responsible for arranging for, paying for, and assuring the completion of corrective actions?

(d) How would any injuries associated with fires, maintenance, or accidents on the site be handled? Who would assure that such events were handled in accordance with legal and medical requirements? Who would pay for any needed rehab or support services?

The Worthington Board of Health is reviewing the STORM WATER MANAGEMENT document forwarded by BlueWave on July 7, 2026, and will submit comments on that document separately.

THANK YOU