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SECRETARY'S BUREAU

Sensenig Dairy
245 Springhill Rd.
Kirkwood, PA 17536

July 28, 2014

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265
Attention: Secretary

RE: Docket L-2014-2404361

Proposed Net Metering Changes

Dear Commissioners:

My husband Cliff and I milk 150 cows and farm 300 acres in southern Lancaster County. We recently installed a methane digester, which powers a 200kW generator to put clean, renewable energy out onto PPL's grid. We recently had the honor of being named one of the 2014 award winners in Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. Our digester has been instrumental in making our farm sustainable, by improving the financial and environmental success of our dairy farm.

Our farm struggled through the low milk prices of 2009. We knew we needed to add revenue to our farm, or we simply wouldn't make it. After researching other options, it was decided a methane digester was the best option for our operation. We went through two years of decision making and permitting before we could start construction. Construction lasted a year. Finally, in October 2012, our digester went online, with the ability to provide 140 homes with their electric needs. It also reduced our farm's greenhouse gas emissions by an equivalent to removing 206 cars from the road. Our digester has been operational now for over a year and a half, and I can say with complete certainty that it is the sole reason our farm is still in operation today.

We have recently learned of the proposal to change the rules for alternative energy projects. The intent of this letter is to inform you how something like this would be devastating to our farm, and quite possibly completely stop the construction of and future projects such as ours.

The total cost of our digester was well over 2 million dollars. We were fortunate enough to receive state and federal grants to help offset these costs. Still, when all was said and done, we were left to pay back almost \$500,000. In the three years before digester completion, our farm's adjusted gross income was \$-6274.00, \$26,103, and \$25,291, respectively. Without added revenue stream from the digester, paying back such a large loan with our small farm's income would have been impossible.

Our farm is on a different meter than the site where the electric generation occurs. A net metering system is used throughout the year to keep track of what we use on the farm, versus what we generate at the digester site. We have just received reimbursement for our first full year's worth of generation. Our farm generated 972,774 more kWh than what we used. This is a significant source of revenue for our farm. Without the guarantee of electric sales each year, we would not have proceeded with the project, and most likely, would have had to sell all of our cows, and our farm. Simply offsetting our electric use each year would not have been enough to justify moving forward with such a large project.

In addition to electric sales, our farm, community, and environment are also benefitted from the digester because of its ability to process food waste. We accept anything from food processing by-products to whole unsalable produce pulled from store shelves. We receive a tipping fee for each load that is dumped here. This is also a plus for the environment, as all the produce that comes through our digester is diverted from a landfill. The processing by-products can be properly digested instead of being taken to a waste treatment facility.

All the waste we receive, including the animal manures, enters a large lagoon until it can be spread on our fields for fertilizer. We take soil samples and samples of our waste, to ensure we are being good stewards of our land. We only accept waste if it will fit into our nutrient management plan. We are aware of the precarious state of our Chesapeake Bay and want to do all we can to keep our nutrients on our farm.

I hope you will reconsider placing restrictions on on-farm digesters. Without the reality of a significant electric check each year, the cost to put in a digester could never be justified on a typical Pennsylvania dairy farm, and I believe our dairy industry could suffer.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Sensenig".

Andrea Sensenig
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