

# Community Action Checklist for Fighting Wind/Solar/BESS

by EDRA of MI, 11.25

## Start by finding answers to these questions:

### 1) Has your municipality passed any ordinances to regulate utility-scale wind/solar?

This will have a big impact on your fight. If the townships have passed ordinances which regulate wind/solar/BESS, then it's possible developer applications can be denied or challenged in court locally. If there are no local zoning ordinances regulating these, developers can apply directly to Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) for permits.

If your township has passed an ordinance, what is it? When was it passed? Find the ordinance and become familiar with its contents, and how it was created.

### 2) What stage is the project in right now?

- Has the developer applied for permits?
- Who currently owns the land?
- Is it being funded by any grants or subsidies? (this is typically the case for out-of-state developers, less so with Consumers Energy and DTE)

### 3) What are the details of the project?

- What is the land currently—farmland? Wetlands?

Forest? (Use [USFW's Wetlands Mapper](#) tool)

- Who are the site's neighbors—residential? Commercial? Agriculture? Are there any vulnerable human populations or habitats that will be affected?
- Use the [EPA's Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) to find out if your community is classified as "vulnerable".
- Is there a site plan?
- Is there an Environmental Impact Study (EIS)?

### 4) What other information can you document about the project and its impacts?

- Solicit the opinion of experts—realtors, fire chiefs, city planners, medical doctors, biologists, geologists—anyone who can speak with authority to specific impacts of the project.
- What are some examples of comparable energy developments? How have they impacted the community and environment?
- Dig into the developer's history. Who are they owned by? What is their history of environmental (non)compliance? Financial (non)compliance?



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## A checklist for local organizing:

Here are some steps we recommend:

- ☐ Form a dedicated Facebook group, if you haven't already. Keep it public, if you can.
- ☐ Form Instagram and TikTok accounts; enlist a Zoomer who can gain a following.
- ☐ Meet with local township officials to gauge their involvement, and to express your concerns.
- ☐ Write & design a one-page flyer (PDF) about the project: what it is, how large, about the developer, major concerns, and specific actions local community members can take.
- ☐ Distribute the flyer across social media; print out flyers and hang them up on public bulletin boards, hand them out to local businesses.
- ☐ Reach out and share your concerns with the leaders of your local public services fire, police, schools, and health and human services. Nurture a two-way dialogue about the potential impacts of the project on their community.
- ☐ Reach out and share your concerns with your local EGLE district supervisors for Air and Water.
- ☐ Find out what EGLE and EPA permits have been applied for, or will be required.
- ☐ Fill your social media accounts/web pages with good info and resources.
- ☐ Connect with other community groups facing the same problem. Learn about their journeys; share successes, failures, and best practices.
- ☐ Host town hall-style meetings with your neighbors in living rooms, barns, or rented halls.
- ☐ Bring in expert speakers to your town hall meetings.
- ☐ Regularly post and promote township board meetings, planning commission meetings, and any relevant public agency hearings; encourage people to attend and express their concerns, on the record.
- ☐ Consider creating a [Change.org](https://www.change.org) or other type of online petition, to show how many people are opposed to the project.
- ☐ Write a letter to the editor of your local paper, expressing your concerns (keep it under 500 words for print).
- ☐ Regularly contact your state and federal legislators through phone and email.
- ☐ Schedule one-on-one phone calls or meetings with your



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state legislators to discuss your community's dilemma. Show how large the opposition is. Nurture an open dialogue.

- ☐ Share legislator contact info and key talking points with social media audiences.
- ☐ Submit an op-ed to us here at EDRA of MI; we'll publish it and send it out to our newsletter.
- ☐ Get your grassroots leaders involved in your local township and county boards.
- ☐ Encourage the right people (including yourself) to apply for local public service appointments (such parks or planning commissions), or to run for township and county offices.
- ☐ Are there township officials who are serving the developer's agenda? If so, explore the feasibility of leading a recall petition.
- ☐ Work with township and county officials to revise Master Plans to reflect the values of your community, and to discourage toxic, heavy industrial development.
- ☐ Encourage good local economic development by helping to revitalize parks, public spaces, local arts and culture, and the small business ecosystem.

## The many faces of grassroots organizing

Local organizing is essential! The more people you have in your corner, the more legislators and regulators will pay attention to what you have to say. Showing solidarity and strength in numbers is important.

Different tactics work for different communities. Some communities have successfully held bi-weekly protests, for years. Others have built Change.org petitions that have gathered 100,000s of signatures. Many have formed a large presence on social media. Others have focused hard on lobbying, and have gained the attention of Lansing legislators.

You don't have to do all of these things to be successful. What's most important is that you focus on your community's strengths. In other words: what can you actually accomplish, together?

Want more info? Reach out and ask for a copy of our **Strategy Guide for Fighting Wind/Solar/BESS** at [contact@edraofmi.org](mailto:contact@edraofmi.org).

