

David W Campbell's address

My name is Dave Campbell. I currently work part-time as an organic crop advisor/consultant for the Rodale Institute, and I advise organic farmers here in the Midwest. I also serve as an associate director for the Kane/Dupage Soil & Water Conservation District here in St Charles. Mary & I own & manage farm property that has been Certified USDA Organic across the road from this proposed solar panel site, for the past 37 years. My father's family homesteaded near Plato Center in the 1840's, and my father donated the one-room Pioneer Sholes Schoolhouse to Kane County that now sits at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve.

My primary concern is whether or not the solar panel company will control the airborne noxious weed seeds on this proposed piece of property, should the County Board approve this zoning petition, both under the solar panels, and around them.

There have been laws on the books in the U.S. going back to 1795, that address airborne weed seed issues. My first recollection of such laws was in 1960 here in Kane County near Hampshire. I can still recall a July evening at the supper table when my grandfather who was a dairy farmer mentioned that one of our neighbors received a visit earlier that day from the Kane County Weed Commissioner. This landowner received a fine levied by Kane County for not mowing down his thistles before the seed became airborne.

With me I have copies of the Illinois Noxious Weed Law that was sent to me by a good friend, Dr. Adam Davis, who is chair of the crop science department at the University of Illinois in Urbana. There are only 9 weeds mentioned here in this list, and only 3 of these have airborne weed seeds, the 3 being Canada thistle, sow thistle, and musk thistle.

The worst thistle offender is Canada thistle. Shortly before the thistle seed head turns a beige color and the thistle down becomes airborne you will notice a lavender or purple colored rosette, which is where the seed is located. Mowing or hand-cutting needs to take place shortly before the rosette turns purple and opens up in order to avoid the airborne spread of invasive seed.

Seeds typically number between 1,000 to 5,000 seeds per plant. It only takes one seed that takes root for a weed patch to get started. The next year, you may notice a few plants, but year after year the thistle patch expands and typically becomes a very large patch over a period of a few years or more. The problem is that the rhizomes (or roots) spread underground, similar to a strawberry plant. But unlike a strawberry plant, a thistle plant has both vertical and lateral roots. Vertical roots can mostly be eradicated by tillage, but not lateral roots, due to the fact that most lateral roots are deeper than what tillage equipment can reach. Thistle plants are perennial weeds that will grow back year after year.

To sum things up, it is our hope that the County Board will enforce Illinois Noxious Weed Laws that are already on the books, when it comes to the responsibility of solar panel companies. Thank you for allowing me to speak this evening.

Mary R Campbell's address

Dave & I have lived across the road from this proposed solar panel site since 1988. My family homesteaded both these parcels in 1836, and still own the parcel across the road from this site. We get a lot of wind out of the south this time of year, and our certified organic property is downwind and only about 300 yards from this proposed site.

The other day, Dave & I were driving down IC Trail Rd, just west of Lily Lake & noticed a lot of Canada thistle blowing across the road. This solar panel farm lies only about ½ mile northwest of our property, adjacent to Route 64, and so for the time period during the months of July & August, when the wind is out of the northwest, even with the slightest breeze, we have Canada & sow thistle seed landing on our property.

Certified organic farmers may choose to use a systemic herbicide, but if so, he or she will lose their organic certification for 3 consecutive years or more. Oftentimes organic farmers will surrender their certification, given the arduous 3 year wait, along with other hassles if a herbicide is applied to certified organic farmland. Most consumers nowadays desire to choose organic food and given we don't have near enough organic production, we need to import the vast majority of organic food into the U.S.

In order to combat thistle issues organically, at some point land will need to be taken out of crop production. It's a very expensive proposition. The most successful organic option is to plant a cover crop of sorghum sudangrass in order to shade out the thistles, although there can be no harvest of this cover crop, which means ZERO income for the entire year, along with expenses that include cash rent at around \$300-350/acre. Expenses also include seed costs, equipment expenses for tillage, along with cover crop termination costs. Typically, you can expect a loss of \$500 or more for each acre taken out of production due to a serious thistle infestation.

Thank you for allowing me to speak this evening.

Illinois Noxious Weed Law (505 ILCS 100/)

This law, administered by the Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, gives county governments the authority and responsibility to survey for, control, and govern the distribution of noxious weeds within their jurisdiction. The law also provides an avenue for the establishment of both a Weed Control Superintendent and Noxious Weed Control Fund within each county. Depending upon the situation, new infestations will be managed by the landowner, by the county, and billed to the landowner, the county and landowner split the costs, or at the expense of the county.

Species Listed

Common and scientific names

- Common ragweed*, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*
- Giant ragweed*, *Ambrosia trifida*
- Marijuana, *Cannabis sativa*
- Musk thistle, *Carduus nutans*
- Canada thistle, *Cirsium arvense*
- Kudzu, *Pueraria montana*
- Perennial sowthistle, *Sonchus arvensis*
- Sorghum, *Sorghum alnum*. Includes Johnsongrass X sorghum crosses with rhizomes
- Johnsongrass, *Sorghum halepense*

* Within corporate limits of cities, villages, and incorporated towns

Illinois Injurious Species Rule (17 IAC Sec. 805)

This law, administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, does not only focus on weeds but also regulates injurious animals. It is illegal for any species on this list to be possessed, propagated, bought, sold, bartered or offered to be bought, sold, bartered, transported, traded, transferred or loaned to any other person or institution unless a permit is first obtained, except persons engaged in interstate transport for lawful commercial purposes who do not buy, sell, barter, trade, transfer, loan or offer to do so in Illinois may transport injurious species across Illinois without an injurious species permit from the Department.