

Dear Marshall City Council Members,

My name is Matthew Woods.

I am writing this letter in support of the rezoning of land allowing the BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project to continue to move forward. I maintain that Marshall has been stagnant for decades. 7253 is a number that has stuck in my mind since childhood. That was the population of Marshall in 1970, over 50 years ago. If our city had kept pace with the U.S., Marshall's population would be approximately 12,000. Instead, the population is now less than it was in 1970.

It seems to me that the most recent employers of any size to move into our city are marijuana processors. Do the people of Marshall really want to be known for processing drugs while over 100,000 Americans died of overdose last year? Leaving aside the discussion of gateways and slippery slopes, it is an embarrassment.

I believe that the silent majority of people in the area support growth and development. Prosperity has passed us by. The BlueOval project will bring thousands of needed jobs and millions of dollars of investment to Marshall and the surrounding area. A broader tax base will allow for the improvement of roads and infrastructure. Home values will rise. There will be more opportunities for our young people. More of them may stay in the area, instead of departing for careers elsewhere.

Believe it or not, these batteries will be made somewhere. Not only will this project help Marshall and the local area, making batteries for electric vehicles that have been outsourced to other countries will shorten the supply chain for the automobile industry in Michigan. I have heard people say that it is a Chinese takeover of our land and economy. I'm typing this letter on a computer made in China and reading it through glasses made in China. Globalization is here, whether we like it or not. It is incoherent to suddenly become xenophobic or jingoistic when it suits us, for whatever reason, and ignore reality.

Where were the NIMBYers when the marijuana plants were rolling into town, or when the hundreds of acres to the north of town were being converted to eyesore solar farms. Poor paying jobs for the processing plants and essentially no jobs at all for the solar farms seems to be alright for the protestors as long as they don't have to worry about increased traffic or seeing real change in the community.

I encourage you to ignore the naysayers and continue the path that you have started on, the rezoning of the BlueOval Park. Even if it fails, you will have at least have tried something to change the stagnation of Marshall.

Thank you,

Matthew Woods

