



“The Power of Community”

April 15, 2019

House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Clem, Vice-Chairs McLain and Post and Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Ted Case, the Executive Director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA). ORECA represents 18 electric cooperatives that serve nearly 500,000 Oregonians in some of the most rural and remote parts of the state.

ORECA urges your support of SB 408A. Providing electric service to rural Oregonians is an often arduous task involving a patchwork of laws and regulations. It has been a tough winter for electric utility providers in rural Oregon, and we are often reminded of the difficulty of serving members at the end of the line. This bill addresses a gap in the tool box for land use decision makers to subdivide Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) for utility facilities necessary for public service. This issue came to light when Morrow County was trying to subdivide land into a smaller parcel for an approved substation on EFU property, which caught the attention of representatives of Umatilla Electric Cooperative.

However, we have discovered that the situation is not isolated to northeastern Oregon. Hood River Electric Cooperative, located in Odell, Oregon also strongly believes this proposal could help improve reliability of the electric grid in the Columbia Gorge.

ORECA commends the bipartisan leadership of Senators Hansell and Manning, along with Rep. Greg Smith to help bring together a diverse group of sponsors and stakeholders to advance this important legislation. On behalf of Oregon’s 18 electric cooperatives I urge your strong support of SB 408A.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our testimony on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ted Case