

House Committee: On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

To: Chair Ken Helm, Vice Chair Annessa Hartman, Vice Chair Mark Owens, and Committee Representatives

Strata Clean Energy is submitting this testimony in Favor of HB3180-1 and the proposed amendments submitted as testimony by Representative Ken Helm. Strata is a family-owned, U.S.-based renewable energy development company established in 2008 with significant experience in Oregon. We understand firsthand the constraints to land use in the state that can impact Oregon's viability to host responsibly developed solar projects. This bill offers the hope and necessary relief to the Oregon Statewide Land Use Planning Goals for siting solar projects. We are impressed by all the work done by the large voluntary stakeholder working group that convened to draft recommendations to refine and strengthen HB3180-1.

We understand firsthand the benefits that successfully sited projects bring the local economy and the host counties. Strata has developed projects in a few counties in Oregon and found the process to be robust and a worthwhile endeavor, especially compared to other states. We work closely with local county staff to determine the best and unique stakeholder and siting considerations for that particular county. Our previous experience working with various counties is that the local staff does an exemplary job of ensuring that projects are developed in a manner that balances the project's needs with those needs of the county, state, environment, and all stakeholders involved. For this reason, we are in favor of raising acreage thresholds of projects that will be under the counties purview.

Sustainable project development relies on siting the best proposal in the best area. The 12/20/320 acreage cap on EFU land does not match the reality and need to meet Oregon's Clean Energy Targets. Projects being assessed on water and land constrained lands in relative distances to transmission lines is workable relief to facilitate some project development to be considered that will lead to some operational projects in Oregon in the next 3 to 6 years' time.

The Goal 3 exception relief on certain lands as described in the bill and proposed amendments at the ESFC siting council is critical to facilitate clean energy development in Oregon to have more than one pathway forward. State agencies can get backlogged with work and ensuring that Counties and the State process are aligned is smart and strategic to expedite the State's clean energy goals.

Project development is a long process entailing 5-plus years. Short term and quick relief is necessary if Oregonians want to encourage the increased energy independence of well sited and responsibly developed projects in the state. As well as reap the benefits of the increased tax income to counties, construction, and clean energy jobs that projects bring as economic benefits.

Allow counties and landowners to utilize some lands for renewable energy development in a way that practically works. It 100% makes sense to utilize not having water rights or irrigation as a criterion paired with distance to transmission lines. The proposed 5% threshold of EFU land per county is an excellent and safe cap for stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garret Lehman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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