



GALLATIN POWER PARTNERS

March 28, 2023

Chair Helm and members of the Committee:

My name is Jeff Fox, and I am the Vice President of Land and Community Affairs with Gallatin Power Partners, a renewable energy and transmission development company based in Bozeman, Montana.

It is my great pleasure to recommend House Bill 3180 for your consideration and approval.

Gallatin Power has initiated the development of over one gigawatt of solar energy capacity in Oregon.

Currently, solar facilities larger than 320 acres sited on agriculture lands require an exception to Oregon's Land Use Planning Goal 3.

We are concerned that permitting authorities have little legislative guidance on where and why to grant Goal 3 exceptions for solar facilities, and the regulatory risk of being denied such an exception, or a slow review for such an exception, is a significant barrier to solar development in Oregon. The current guidance offered by the Energy Facilities Siting Council (EFSC) for when a Goal 3 exception for a proposed solar facility is warranted offers no bright line tests to determine whether a project qualifies.

Given the growing number and size of solar facilities coming before these permitting authorities, we view the risk of Goal 3 exception denials or delays as a significant obstacle to Oregon capturing the economic opportunities solar energy offers, and meeting Oregon's energy goals, especially in the near-term.

House Bill 3180, as presented in the [proposed amendment found in the testimony submitted by Representative Ken Helm](#), attempts to identify characteristics of agricultural areas where the siting of large-scale solar facilities is appropriate. Gallatin Power has engaged with stakeholders over the last year in large table discussions, small groups, and individual negotiations to help identify these characteristics.

Though we have not yet found consensus and agreement among stakeholders, the provisions in House Bill 3180 relating to distance from transmission, underlying soil class, irrigation availability, and the county wide acreage cap were all designed or modified to be responsive to agricultural concerns.

Based on feedback from agricultural organizations, this bill largely avoids any irrigated farmlands, which are responsible for 73% of the total value of Oregon's harvested crops according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

The proposed amendment for House Bill 3180 will provide significant economic opportunity for private farm owners, and millions of dollars in direct payments to local governments for essential public services including infrastructure, economic development, and education. If passed, this bill will accelerate the creation of thousands of local construction jobs and hundreds of permanent operations and maintenance positions. It will also direct solar energy development away from Oregon's most profitable farmland and accelerate Oregon's pathway to clean energy.

We urge the Committee to support House Bill 3180 with the amendment proposed in Representative Helm's submitted testimony.

Respectfully submitted by,

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