



February 27, 2025

Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

My name is James Anderson, and I serve as the CEO and General Manager of Midstate Electric Cooperative. Midstate Electric has 21,729 accounts of which 513 are irrigation, we cover 5,600 miles of service territory in the counties of Deschutes, Klamath, Lake, and Lane.

I am here today in strong support of House Bill 3346, which addresses the siting of energy facilities on designated critical groundwater areas.

Midstate Electric has a vested interest in this bill, particularly in supporting our farmers and ranchers. Many of these designated critical groundwater areas include land that is not viable for traditional farming due to water constraints. However, these areas, specifically irrigation field corners, present an excellent opportunity for solar energy development, with potential capacities ranging from one to four megawatts per field.

We support this legislation for the following reasons:

Most of these corners cannot be used for farming due to water availability issues.

Midstate Electric's infrastructure already serves these irrigation areas, meaning we can efficiently integrate solar energy installations without disrupting existing agricultural operations.

Designating these areas for solar facilities provides a practical energy solution, allowing for sustainable energy development without interfering with productive farmland.

This bill benefits not only Midstate Electric but also other electric cooperatives across the state. There are approximately nine cooperatives in Oregon with irrigation areas that could benefit from this same approach.

By supporting this bill, we can unlock new energy sources in areas that would otherwise remain unused, contributing to both energy resilience and agricultural sustainability.

For these reasons, Midstate Electric strongly urges the Committee to pass this important legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions.