

March 20, 2025

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon Legislature

RE: Agrivoltaics Task Force (HB 2063)

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Levy, and Members of the Committee:

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing over 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

My name is Ryan Krabill, and on behalf of OFB, thank you for your consideration of our comments on the formation of an Agrivoltaics Task Force as described in HB 2063. Our understanding is that Oregon law is largely silent on the emerging issue of agrivoltaics, or co-location of agricultural or livestock production in concert with photovoltaic production. As a general rule, we support the ability of our members to diversify revenue streams that align with existing land use laws that seek to protect Oregon's agricultural lands, also known as Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) lands. We also strive to balance EFU protection with the rights conferred to owners of private property.

As evidenced by the introduction of HB 2063, the issue of agrivoltaics and its pending addition to the Oregon policy and geographic landscape is a complex one that deserves a thoughtful, deliberative process. Oregon's farmers and ranchers are under tremendous financial pressures associated with higher inputs, regulatory burdens, and unconstrained labor costs. The ultimate real-world result is the loss of farms—in fact, 2,069 farms were lost from 2017 and 2022, according to an analysis conducted by Oregon State University using data from USDA's once-per-five-years Ag Census.¹ In other words, Oregon is losing more than one farm per day, based upon the most recent data available. While this specific bill is not likely to address those near-term challenges that threaten the survival of

¹ <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/business-economics/rural-development/oregon-agriculture-numbers-part-1-total-farms-farmland-acres>

our mid-size farms through the continued movement towards farm consolidation, if done correctly, it could potentially serve as the precursor to another tool in the revenue diversification toolbox that is sorely needed in Oregon's farm country. Accordingly, we encourage that the Task Force be developed with that mindset.

We strongly believe that the underlying goal of any policy recommendations that emerge from the Task Force must begin from the perspective of Oregon's agricultural producers in a direct effort to protect an essential part of Oregon's rural landscape and the backbone of Oregon's rural economies. Even as a concept and subsequently evidenced in its name, agrivoltaics recognizes that agriculture is the start. With that in mind and in addition to the consideration currently being given to the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), we would also encourage the consideration of Task Force placement outside of DLCD. Both the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) or the Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO) are both suitable alternatives that would be worthy of consideration for the implementation of HB 2063.

Additionally, we encourage that additional thought be given to the makeup and charge of the Task Force. Specifically, we request amendments to address the following:

1. We fundamentally disagree with the implied assertion outlined in Section (2)(c)(C) and (2)(c)(D) that "large agricultural operations" cannot also be "family farms." According to ODA's website, 96% of Oregon farms are family-owned.² Word choice matters and in this instance, does a disservice to Oregon's agricultural producers, regardless of size, who tirelessly toil in a state well known for its overall inhospitable business and regulatory climate.³ A related example is the recent March 12 hearing on HB 2548 (Establishes the Agricultural Workforce Labor Standards Board) when proponents of the bill openly questioned the negative impact of the bill on "family farms," despite their extensive footprint throughout the state. The point is that over the years, a narrative has developed as illustrated in this bill that has now created a false perception that must be corrected.
2. While we appreciate the flexibility given to the director to name other individuals to the task force, we are dismayed by the defined presence of only two members of Oregon's agricultural community to an 11-person task force. Oregon is notoriously diverse from an agricultural standpoint, with more than 220 commercially produced crops, consisting of everything from grass seed and row crops to pear orchards and cranberry bogs. By reducing Oregon's ag sector to one undefined "large" and one undefined "small" producer, it is oversimplified to our collective detriment and will yield a one-size-fits-all approach ill-suited to the realities of Oregon's agricultural landscape and economic contributions. We respectfully request that the makeup of the roster reflect the fundamental necessity that Oregon's agricultural sector

² <https://www.oregon.gov/oda/about-us/pages/default.aspx>

³ <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/07/11/americas-top-states-for-business-full-rankings.html>

delivers to this shortcoming. To that end, we request that the committee consider additional regional, cropping system, and livestock production representation.

3. While we appreciate that a specific list of research deliverables is included, we are also somewhat alarmed at the initial goals as laid out in HB 2063. For example, in Section (3)(b), “benefits of agrivoltaics” is specifically called out, but not deficiencies or risks. In Section (3)(c), the “potential for agrivoltaics on smaller family farms” is emphasized without a corresponding deliverable for farms that may not fit the predetermined “small” description. Without referring back to our prior points in detail, these concerns could be more adequately addressed through appropriate Task Force representation.
4. Finally, if implemented, we strongly encourage the Task Force to prioritize existing, independent, academic, peer-reviewed agrivoltaics research over agency or industry-funded studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our recommendations for the development of a stronger, more deliberate Agrivoltaics Task Force. On behalf of Oregon’s agricultural community, OFB is eager to engage in thoughtful discussions on agrivoltaics, ensuring that any policy outcomes support and strengthen the viability of farming and ranching across the state. By centering the needs and expertise of agricultural producers, the Task Force has the opportunity to develop a balanced, forward-thinking approach that fosters both renewable energy development and the long-term sustainability of Oregon’s farms and ranches, which has been overlooked for far too long. We look forward to collaborating with policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders to craft solutions that uphold Oregon’s agricultural heritage while embracing new opportunities for economic resilience and innovation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan J. Krabill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan J. Krabill
Oregon Farm Bureau