

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

March 25, 2025

RE: SB 1178 SUPPORT

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and members of the committee,

The Hilderbrand family has been farming in Sherman County since the late 1880's and continues to this day. While I farm, I have also installed a wind turbine project (6 turbines / 9 MWs) on our farm that I own and operate. And the planning process has commenced for 3 MW of solar generation facility with the battery storage that will be integrated with my wind turbines.

Our farm does not have the benefit of irrigation, nor does it have natural precipitation as many other areas in Western and Eastern Oregon. Our area averages 8-10 inches of precipitation yearly. Therefore, we are limited to soft white winter wheat production on a summer fallow basis, i.e. one crop every two years. The wheat is sold almost exclusively to Asia. Where we are under increased competition with the emergence of the BRICS economic bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The BRICS block has a higher GDP than the G7. BRICS now produces 44% of the world's grain and accounts for 33% of the world's wheat exports. WE ARE NO LONGER THE WORLD'S SOLE BREADBASKET.

With cash bids delivered to Portland of \$5.90 - \$6.10 / bushel and production costs significantly higher, the family farm on my side of the mountains is under a direct threat to survive. Farmers in Eastern Oregon need to diversify to survive. For myself and other Eastern Oregon farmers who want to diversify with renewable energy SB 1178 provides critical market access for a small renewable energy project. The IOU's have long controlled market access for small renewable energy projects. SB 1178 helps break the monopoly control of market access.

Starting your own renewable energy project is not easy and not for the faint of heart. For landowners who want to diversify with their own renewable energy project – access to the market and being able to sell your energy is paramount. The IOU's have been very successful with controlling market access by pushing to limit the size of these projects to 3 MWs generation in some cases. SB 1178 opens up the size of projects to 20 MWs of generation and requires the IOUs purchase 10% of their generation from small projects.

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The other points stated in SB 1178 are all valid. But I want to add that several economic studies from NREL to Oregon State all demonstrate that small renewable energy projects return economic value of 3-4 times more than large investor-owned utility scale projects to the local community. My little renewable project is one of the largest taxpayers in Sherman County. I also have full-time local employees along with countless sub-contractors for services from accounting to maintenance. And the profits stay local and are not exported out to Wall Street.

Oregon needs the larger utility scale projects and the small, local investor projects – please support SB 1178.

Regards



Ormand Hilderbrand

Wasco, Oregon