House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: "Yes" on HB 3422

To Chair Lively and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment

Friends of Linn County is an independent 501(c)(3) organization devoted to protection of farm and forest land in Linn County. **We support the adoption of HB 3422** and request the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment to move this important measure to eventual passage by the 2025 Oregon Legislature.

According to 1000 Friends of Oregon, solar facility siting is one of the principal causes of continued loss of high-value farmland in Oregon. More broadly, conflict between farmers and solar developers is intensifying nationwide. Farming is soil-dependent in a way that solar power facilities re not. Farmers are no match for the high-dollar international corporations seeking farmland for solar development. For these reasons, additional rules are needed to protect farm ground from conversion to solar uses. This additional protection is the sole purpose of HB 3422, and so we strongly support it.

Protection for farm ground is already enshrined in Oregon land use rules with one major loophole. That loophole allows large-scale solar facilities to bypass the 'alternative sites analysis' normally required for conversion of high value farmland to another use. HB 3422 will close this loophole.

Finally, it is relevant to note that the 2022 Oregon Renewable Energy Siting Assessment "confirms that there is enough renewable energy potential in the state to meet Oregon's energy and climate goals." Hard work and innovation will be required to mitigate the conflicts between farming and solar energy production, but it can be done with the kind of levelling of the playing field that will be accomplished with the passage of HB 3422.

Again, we urge the Committee to move HB 3422 to the House of Representatives with a recommendation for adoption.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Harcombe
Friends of Linn County