



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

Re: Support 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.

Overwhelmingly, the land consumed by solar development is farmland. As in the case with any industry, developers will always look for the least costly and easiest pathway for development. In many instances, farmland – generally flat and wide open – checks the boxes for the developer. But farmland is not vacant land waiting to be developed as many a developer may perceive it. I need not reiterate the value of agriculture to the state's economy and the health and wellbeing of so many citizens, but suffice it to say, farmland is a crucial component of our agricultural industry.

Oregon agriculture deserves protection, and Oregon's land use planning program protects millions of acres of farmland. But this limited resource remains under persistent and increasing threat. Increasing threat to our farmland warrants increasing protections for our farmland.

HB 3422 **is not a ban** on siting solar facilities on farmland. HB 3422 simply requires solar companies to first analyze the suitability of urban, industrial, and otherwise developed lands for solar siting. Unavoidably, some farmland will need to be consumed by solar development. However, our renewable energy needs cannot be met by simply paving over farmland with solar panels. HB 3422 provides a motivating force for solar developers to explore alternative solutions to irrevocably converting farmland to a non-agricultural use.

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

Sincerely,

Suzi Maresh
Friends of Linn County