



M.D. Acres
798 SE Dover Lane
Madras, Oregon 97741

Chair Lively and Committee Members,
House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE Salem, Oregon 97301

Support HB 3422 Solar Parity

Dear Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy and Committee Members,

You have heard a lot of support in the testimony at the hearing and when viewing the written testimony sent in. My sheep are lambing so I wasn't available to attend the hearing in person to show my support.

I was one of the farmers that originally visited with many of the House of Representatives weeks ago seeking support for this bill. I want to thank everyone that we spoke with for being gracious hosts to our group which represented support from the South Valley, Mid Valley, North Valley and Central Oregon. As a diversified group we are solidly united in wanting HB 3422 to pass. We feel that the bill is needed so Goal 3 and Goal 11 need to be balanced. Agriculture needs a sound, sustainable land base for generations to come competing in a world market as price takers and not price setters. Remember the role that agriculture plays in the green energy movement with carbon sequestration.

In my view solar seems to be always changing as technology and government subsidies moves it forward as green energy. The focus was to have homes, businesses, schools and industry with solar roofs. Which we have in our county. We even have solar utility plants. Now the focus is to put solar on agricultural lands, even high value EFU lands. The solar industry is aggressive in trying to lease or buy up agricultural lands. Why the big change? I was told that it is due to costs. It is less expensive to install a solar plant on flat land close to transmission lines and substations.

I have attached a map from the Association of Counties on the EFU lands that were being discussed at the hearing. You need to look at the small amount of lands left in the valley. I agree with Rep. B. Levy and Rep. Owens in their statements of the value of agricultural lands in a farming or ranching operation. No one is opposed to solar, we are asking for a balance and recognizing the need for both.

I have a lot of unanswered questions when solar changed from being on roofs to moving to agricultural lands. My questions were really brought about after attending a two-day Eastern Oregon Solar RAC meeting held in Madras prior to when a wildfire called the Elk Drive fire happened in 2024 in Jefferson County. A proposed large 200-acre solar utility plant (I don't believe in calling them solar farms) would have been in the direct path of the fire. Luck was on everyone's side with no homes or lives lost. The questions and concerns that came about after the fire need to be listened too. (1) a small fire department in Madras wouldn't have the capability to handle a major solar plant fire



M.D. Acres
798 SE Dover Lane
Madras, Oregon 97741

(2) what are the pollution effects in the moment and residue from such a fire (3) whom is financially liable to the rural community (4) where will the clean up debris go.

As I mentioned, I attended the DLCD Eastern Oregon Solar RAC meeting in Madras. That two days opened my eyes on the power that the solar industry has in Oregon and their agenda. It wasn't about balance, but about their bottom line. The agricultural industry and agency representatives were always pushing back to protect wildlife, natural resources and high value agricultural lands. At the hearing a solar representative referred to the Eastern Oregon Solar RAC and how in June DLCD would be adopting the proposed rules. I virtually attended the LCDC/DLCD meeting on March 20, 2025. That was not the impression that I got when listening to the presentation by Jon Jinnings, DLCD Eastern Oregon Solar RAC coordinator. They still have at least one more meeting this month. A public hearing was held on March 20, 2025 to review and discuss the draft rules. Yet, on HB 3681 on March 11, 2025 before this committee a solar facility representative referenced the difficulties of the Eastern Oregon Solar RAC.

I am attaching a link to a very well written article published January 21, 2025 by Gosia Wozniacka from the Oregonian, called "Solar boom in Oregon could reshape rural landscapes, agriculture". Here is some key information from the article **"Solar projects currently on the books, approved by both the state and the counties, would take up 44,000 acres of Oregon farmland, according to data from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.**

The Oregonian/OregonLive analysis of the figures shows 20% of that is high-value farmland and 45% is soil deemed suitable for growing crops, a lower farmland category. The rest of the solar acreage is on rangeland or soils with no history of irrigation where the state hopes to steer the biggest solar facilities.

Another nearly 30,000 acres of solar projects are proposed for farmland and likely to be approved by Oregon's Energy Facility Siting Council, a state board that oversees solar and other energy projects. Again, much of the proposed acreage is on high-value soil or land suitable for cultivation. If approved, the projects would double the state's solar acreage to 74,000 – or about 115 square miles, slightly smaller than the city of Portland. (There may be other projects in the works under review by counties, but the state doesn't track them until it receives notice from the counties of their decisions.)."

To read the full article go to: [Solar boom in Oregon could reshape rural landscapes, agriculture - oregonlive.com](https://www.oregonlive.com/solar-boom-in-oregon-could-reshape-rural-landscapes-agriculture-oregonlive.com)

Here is another article that has the Washington State Department of Ag concerned about returning the soils to agricultural production once a solar facility is decommissioned.

Washington State: Solar Panels will Damage Farm Soils

The Washington State Department of Agriculture says solar installations will damage soils, disputing a claim by an energy company that 1,000 acres of prime farmland in Klickitat County could revert to agriculture in 25 years and be as productive as before... The soil may need decades to recover after the solar panels and posts are gone, she stated. "Even with decommissioning, WSDA does not expect the ground to meet pre-project agricultural viability."—Don Jenkins, Capital Press, Jan 25, 2024:



M.D. Acres
798 SE Dover Lane
Madras, Oregon 97741

https://www.capitalpress.com/ag_sectors/rurallife/washington-state-solar-panels-will-damage-farm-soils/article_09f272ea-baf1-11ee-a225-eb49c72e324a.html

Once you read those articles and look at the DLCD recorded hearing on Eastern Oregon Solar RAC a lot of unanswered questions arise on why Oregon isn't looking to study the "what ifs" when decommissioning occurs of solar utility plants...they aren't farms, the Goal 3 that was to protect the farms and ranches are what we are asking you to do and find balance, which HB 3422 does.

Sincerely,

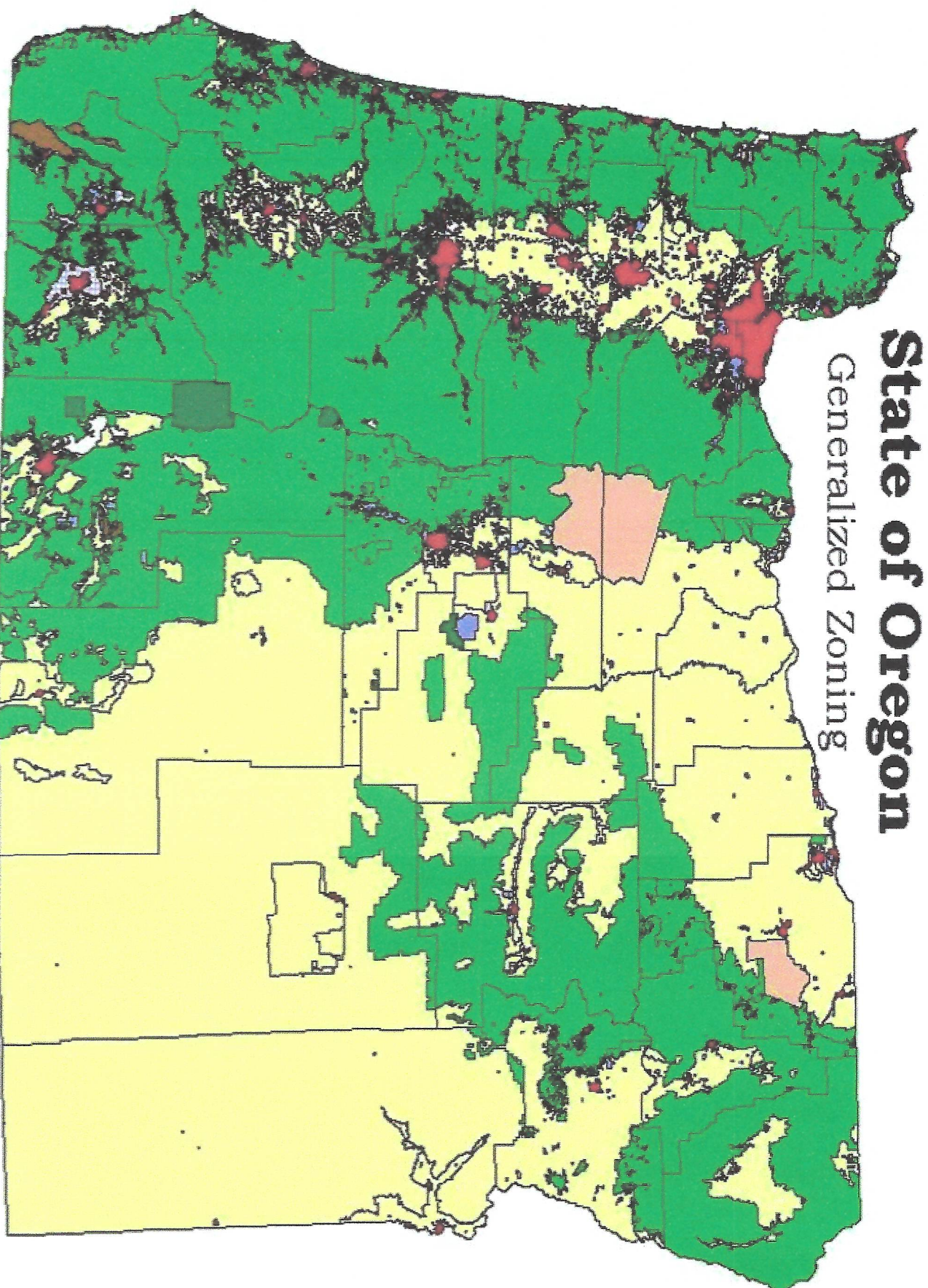
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mikey Kulligswort".










Owner/ Operator

Attachment: Generalized Zoning Map for AOC meeting packet

State of Oregon

Generalized Zoning



- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Exclusive Farm Use |  | Park/Recreation |  | Non-Resource |
|  | Forest |  | Reservation |  | Rural Commercial & Industrial |
|  | Rural Residential |  | Urban |  | Rural Residential and Farm
(too mixed to depict accurately at this scale) |

