

Submitter: Johnny Buether

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1034

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

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-chair Smith, and members of the committee,

Our family has been farming and ranching in Sherman County, Oregon for over 3 generations. The location, soils, topography and rainfall provide extremely limited options for agricultural use. However the proximity of power distribution infrastructure, reliable sunlight, and suitable topography may allow diversification of part of our property for solar development. We believe solar energy development represents a significant opportunity for our family, our county and Oregon State. We want to retain our rights to pursue those opportunities with logical, fair, sustainable and efficient processes.

My family and I strongly oppose SB 1034 for several key reasons.

SB 1034 appears another procedural administrative hurdle and complication in alternative energy siting that may significantly impact my family's use of our land. HB 3422 can inject additional time, cost and uncertainty/risk into decision making for energy project siting process. There is an established process that seems to work. The Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) does consider a large number of site-specific factors. With the combined resources of the State of Oregon, we hope that the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) process can continue to be improved and made more efficient to leverage our available resources and meet our needs for the future. That energy project siting process does not need more, possibly arbitrary, barriers placing our family lands, our county or our state at a significant competitive disadvantage risking our individual and collective futures.

I believe energy siting can be a complex process requiring significant expertise seldom available at a local level and may be limited even at the state level. The state of Oregon has an established and operational Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) with the responsibility and expectation to make objective, and science-based decisions for renewable energy facilities. SB 1034 appears to subvert and undermine the thorough and evidence-based approach with a piecemeal subjective process that could be influenced by local political winds, personal bias and misinformation.

SB 1034 also appears to limit the jurisdiction of the Oregon State Supreme Court by restricting the judicial review process. The bill proposes a vaguely defined local review process that leaves critical decisions to local individuals without regard to the comprehensive, fact-based studies currently mandated by the EFSC dealing with environmental, cultural, economic and other issues. SB 1034 appears to propose a very dangerous and poorly defined precedent without clear potential benefits.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose SB 1034 and advocate for the continuation of the EFSC's proven, science-based approach to renewable energy facility siting. I hope we can rely on Oregon's continued progress toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.

Thank you for your consideration.
Johnny F. Buether