

Testimony Supporting SB-1034

Dear Committee members,

Travelers on I-84 in Morrow County encounter a hodge-podge of electrical transmission towers and lines crossing over thousands of acres. One needn't be an engineer to see what the future will be like elsewhere if the pattern continues. The 2017 "Climate Emergency" declared by former Governor Brown is not a license to circumvent Oregon's Land Use Plan. The Plan was designed to foster public involvement (Goal 1), protect Agriculture (Goal 3), and preserve Public Resources (Goal 5). SB-1034 meets those goals.

In the 2019 Jackson County decision, the Oregon Court of Appeals ruled that convenient access to the existing electrical grid was not a justification for allowing development of solar facilities on farmland. The Court also clarified that Solar facilities are not "farms". There are heavily financed efforts by promoters to secure large tracts of farmland for siting commercial solar and wind complexes across the state. Accessing existing transmission lines and grids consumes additional land and creates significant impacts including the destruction of scenery.

Carefully designated corridors have been created at great expense to accommodate expansion of the system. The infrastructure being installed today will be in place for generations. Disregarding State and local ordinances, especially setbacks, is convenient but short sighted.

In effect SB-1034 restores some local authority and removes carte blanc authority from the Oregon Energy Siting Council. The Council has a history of overzealous approvals for projects that have been problematic and have underperformed. Support for the bill by cities and counties may be influenced by a desire to avoid the costs to conduct land use processes. Supplemental funding for local entities to address the costs may be necessary in the future.

I am not opposed to wind and solar energy, but do oppose abuse of the Oregon Land Use Plan. Please vote to move SB-1034 forward.

Les Poole