

April 2, 2025

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Oregon Legislature

RE: Support for SB 1034

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee:

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing over 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech. My name is Ryan Krabill, and on behalf of OFB, thank you for the opportunity to supplement my oral testimony during the committee's meeting on March 31 with these written comments in support of SB 1034.

SB 1034 deserves serious consideration because it seeks to realign Oregon's large-scale energy siting process with the values and priorities of our land use system that endeavors to balance state and local considerations. By removing the Energy Facility Siting Council's ability to override local land use criteria in favor of broader statewide goals, this bill strengthens local accountability, restores balance to a skewed regulatory framework, and better protects Oregon's most irreplaceable resource—its farmland.

Today, Oregon's regulatory regime unintentionally incentivizes the conversion of farmland to industrial-scale renewable energy projects. This regulatory asymmetry has real consequences. For many property owners, the path of least resistance—and greatest financial return—is no longer farming, but leasing their land for energy development. That decision is rarely made lightly. It reflects the cumulative weight of economic and regulatory pressures: rising input costs, volatile markets, labor shortages, and, in particular, an ever-growing burden of compliance with environmental, labor, and land use regulations.

In this environment, renewable energy leases can offer stability that farming no longer guarantees. But the long-term result is a slow, largely unintentional conversion of some of the most productive farmland in the country into industrial use, that if not permanent in

nature, certainly will have generational impacts—often without the full participation or approval of the local communities most affected.

SB 1034 takes a pragmatic step toward correcting this imbalance. It ensures that energy facilities must comply with local land use plans and regulations, not just general statewide goals. It does not prohibit renewable energy development, nor does it prevent farmers from diversifying their operations. Rather, it ensures that such development occurs through transparent, locally accountable processes that weigh the full impact on surrounding land uses and community values.

This bill respects the integrity of Oregon's land use system by reaffirming that decisions about local zoning and community-directed planning should not be overridden by state-level exceptions. It also supports Oregon's agricultural future by preserving the viability of farming as a competitive and rewarding land use—not one rendered obsolete by an uneven regulatory playing field.

Oregon's agricultural lands are a strategic asset. They feed our communities, anchor our rural economies, and support ecological resilience. Once taken out of production, these lands are rarely reclaimed. SB 1034 acknowledges that energy development and agriculture can—and must—coexist, but that coexistence depends on a fair process that does not tip the scale in favor of short-term economic opportunity over long-term food security and rural vitality.

We encourage the committee to advance SB 1034. This legislation reflects sound policy, good governance, and a genuine commitment to preserving the agricultural legacy and economic future of our state.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan J. Krabill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan J. Krabill  
Oregon Farm Bureau