

HB 3681-A

Dear Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

May 8, 2025

My Family's farm is located in Morrow County and will be impacted by Idaho Power B2H 500 kV transmission line. Because of our experience with ODOE and EFSC, I **oppose** HB 3681-A. ORS 758.015(2)(a) removes the evaluation of safety, practicability and justification of a proposed transmission line and changes it to simply a determination of whether there is a need for capacity and reliability.

EFSC is not properly equipped to determine transmission convenience and necessity. Because ODOE receives fees for the siting of energy projects by a utility or developer, their decisions regarding necessity would become a conflict of interest. EFSC is then swayed by the utility or developer argument and legal prowess without truly considering and fully mitigating landowner impacts and burdens. The siting of Transmission is based on a least cost approach by the applicant and often resists corridors because developers and utilities refuse cooperative engagement that promote co-location of infrastructure as witnessed between WheatRidge East and B2H. What will happen at this point, is siting of transmission without consideration of alternate routes (that's what PUC does) and EFSC cannot make suggestions or recommendations of alternate routes. They only approve or disapprove plans the applicant submitted. An article, Green Corridor in the East Oregonian explained issues on May 18, 2017. While the page has since been taken down, reporter George Plaven explains,

"As more wind and solar projects take shape in Eastern Oregon, the Umatilla Basin finds itself caught between interests. On the one hand, Oregon utilities must provide an increasing amount of energy from renewable sources, and green energy developers are eager to build around the region. Farmers, however, worry about a mess of transmission lines criss-crossing their property to connect to the power grid, cutting over fields and taking valuable land out of production. The conflict is so great that Gov. Kate Brown established an advisory committee in October 2015 to brainstorm possible solutions. After more than a year of meetings, the committee issued its final report in February, taking stock of local agriculture and energy needs."

This problem will escalate if HB 3681 passes. Oregon cannot depend on developers or utilities to cooperate or protect Oregon Citizens, because their least cost approach dictates construction on flat, farmlands as more economical.

Has the state of Oregon decided that the OPUC has not fulfilled their mission concerning Transmission Infrastructure to the extent they have no purpose or substance? It appears these agencies have been directed to appease developers

and utilities in the name of “renewable energy,” without meaningful regard of environmental and private impacts.

What you don’t know, is that ODOE’s Energy Facility Siting Counsel doesn’t have a standard for Cumulative Impacts that contemplates multiple energy facilities within a geographical area. The one Cumulative Standard is for Wind farms and the council has no idea how to implement it. Morrow County is the poster child of Renewable Energy Production and Transmission with no concern for Cumulative impacts and risks to agriculture landowners and citizens within that community. Each project is evaluated independently. EFSC needs more stringent standards, and threatens our community by the power to condemn with HB 3681.

Agriculture Landowners will be targeted for transmission in the name of “Greater Good” while receiving the label of “least private injury” by an agency that is already so lenient on developers and compliance that its likely a private landowner will never achieve due process. This streamlined bill is crafted to remove citizen protections and due process.

The reason there are so few opposing HB 3681, is because until a landowner’s property is targeted, they have no idea their land is in jeopardy. They would have little time to understand the impacts, risks and future intentions of the Transmission project on their livelihood. Unsuspecting property owners are usually the last to know. I caution you to Keep OPUC process in place, otherwise you will be placing the determination of “of safety, practicability and justification” in developer hands. Better yet, perhaps you should conduct a poll of all property owners and EFU landowners about how HB 3681 changes their rights and due process and if they support or oppose it. Your determination of the purpose of this bill directly affects environmental justice Rural Landowners and Communities.

If Oregon allows yet another for profit utility to take additional land my family has farmed for 5 generations to build a transmission line without allowing me due process regarding the eventual land use decisions which will occur sometime in the future, my rights will have been utterly betrayed.

Thank you for the Opportunity to Speak Freely,

Wendy King
Redmond, Oregon