

Senate Committee on Business and Transportation  
**Testimony in Support of HB 2704 A-eng**  
Doris Penwell, Association of Oregon Counties &  
Community Renewable Energy Association  
Thursday May 9, 2013

I am representing Association of Oregon Counties and the Community Renewable Energy Association in support of HB 2704.

Last November Representative Greg Smith convened a group of affected parties, including our Associations, Umatilla County, Umatilla Electric, RNP, DLCD, and other important entities as necessary to craft the bill before you. His efforts should be lauded.

The bill before you updates statutes to allow counties to permit the siting of associated transmission lines in areas zoned for exclusive farm use or arable lands, under certain stringent conditions, and to work with developers to review and consider alternative routes for the siting of the lines during their conditional use permitting process. Umatilla County had earlier tried to impose conditions on the siting of a line during the permitting of an energy projects, but LUBA sent the case back saying that the statute didn't allow for this.

Through discussions with all parties, we all came to realize that a better process needed to be in place for all counties and for developers. The bill proposes that there be two possible paths for siting of these lines: (a) a simple permitting process where none of the lines cross high value or arable lands and is within or parallel to existing transmission corridors; or (b) in the second instance, following a land use process where the applicant and the county can evaluate reasonable alternatives and demonstrate that the preferred route is the best alternative, and if necessary, mitigate impacts on high value farm land or arable lands.

We recommend support for HB 2704A.