



P.O Box 1083  
McMinnville, OR 97128

April 3, 2017

Helping to shape the use of our natural resources to protect the quality of life in Yamhill County.

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House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97901

RE: Testimony on HB 3050

Chair Clem and members of the Committee:

Friends of Yamhill County works to protect natural resources through the implementation of land use planning goals, policies, and laws that maintain and improve the present and future quality of life in Yamhill County for both urban and rural residents. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the above-referenced bill.

Yamhill County's best high value agricultural lands are under unrelenting pressure from non-agricultural uses. The current push from solar arrays is turning into a gold rush. We presently have two twelve-acre solar facilities sited on high value EFU land, four more similar facilities have just been approved, and we have another application for a forty-acre facility to be sited on EFU land. We are concerned about the cumulative impact of the loss of our high value farmland to non-agricultural uses such as commercial solar farms, aggregate mining, highway building and expanding urban areas. These lands, essential to Yamhill County's thriving agricultural economy, are irreplaceable.

Friends of Yamhill County supports the development of alternative energy sources, such as solar. Our farmers are already using solar energy, combined with our rich soils, to generate a wealth of agricultural products. The rules governing the siting of commercial solar facilities should direct energy developers to more appropriate sites such as brownfields and other unused land and away from our high value EFU land. We urge amending HB 3050 to remove solar arrays from the list of non-farm uses allowed on high-value farmland.

HB 3050 adds the concept of alternative analysis to the rules governing the siting of commercial solar facilities. The inclusion of this is critical, yet this proposal needs to be more robust. The analysis should include the complete service area of the utility purchasing the power.

Present regulations (OAR 660-033-0130(38)(j)) allow counties to require the developer to provide a bond to cover the responsibility for retiring the solar power facilities, but counties need not do so. The bill should be amended to **require** the developer of a commercial solar power facility to post a bond to cover the costs of decommissioning the solar facility **and** restoring the land to its former condition.

Friends of Yamhill County supports HB 3050, it is a step in the right direction in the protection of our best agricultural land.

Sincerely,

/s/

Tom Abrego  
Friends of Yamhill County