



**STATEMENT OF TED CASE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OREGON RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
IN SUPPORT OF HB 2023**

Chair Clem, Vice-Chair McLain, Vice-Chair Sprenger and Members of the Committee, for the record I am Ted Case the Executive Director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association. ORECA represents 18 electric cooperatives who serve nearly a half a million Oregonians in the most rural and remote parts of the state. Our electricity supply to our members is over 90 percent emission free through the Federal Columbia River Power System.

We are pleased to offer our strong support for HB 2023, which was introduced to resolve a conflict between the requirement of Umatilla Electric Cooperative (UEC) to meet its renewable portfolio standard (RPS) as a Large Utility and current provisions in statute and rule which treats Exclusive Farm Use Land as high value farmland by virtue of its location within a federally-defined American Viticultural Area.

Under the RPS, Umatilla Electric is expected to provide 100MW of renewable energy by 2025. UEC has chosen to meet that obligation through the development of solar arrays in their service territory. However, UEC requires this legislation to navigate through a complex web of land-use requirements, and to keep the solar projects cost effective for their members. While I will defer to representatives of Umatilla Electric to outline all the various hurdles to building the solar projects, I want to comment on the extraordinary stakeholder process to get us here today.

This legislation is the product of a remarkably inclusive process with a wide-range of stakeholders who met to reach the following goals: to keep the statutory solution narrowly focused only on the Columbia Valley Viticultural area to minimize unintended consequences; to avoid exempting land that can be used for farming; and to avoid ambiguous language that could have an impact beyond solving this particular problem.

UEC's 10,000 members include a large number of irrigators and farmers. These agriculture interests, like all of UEC's members, are owners of the cooperative and want to keep their energy costs down with as little impact on farming operations as possible. ORECA believes that HB 2023 strikes this careful balance. I strongly urge the Committee to pass this responsible, common-sense legislation.