

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Schouten, and members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment.

For the record I am Don Russell, Morrow County Commissioner, submitting my testimony in both that capacity and as Chair of the Community Renewable Energy Association, or CREA.

As I start my second term as a county commissioner in a small county (population 12,000) with a significant energy footprint (over 2,000 megawatts of generation capacity) I have seen first hand that energy generation permitting is done much more efficiently and with greater local involvement when completed at the local level. Our Planning Commission is made up of nine local citizens who, as part of the conditional use permit public hearing process, listen to neighbors of the project and can work with developers to be sure that those local issues are identified and addressed. Our very capable planning staff have pre-application meetings with the developer bringing to the table the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, our local weed manager, and our local transportation managers, either the county Public Works staff or ODOT representatives as appropriate to the project. If concerns are identified throughout the project, we work to resolve them. **And most important to smaller projects is that the local approval process must statutorily be concluded within 150 days.** This last point bears repeating. **And most important to smaller projects is that the local approval process must statutorily be concluded within 150 days.** Oregon counties have been successfully implementing the Oregon Land Use Planning Program for 40 years, dealing with any number of projects, small and large, on farm land and around our communities. Our very capable county Planner Carla McLane is here in person and will address the variety of standards that counties have available and utilize when reviewing large projects and in particular energy generation projects.

At CREA we support use of free enterprise principles to create opportunity for economically and environmentally responsible electric generation within the State of Oregon. Our membership includes a number of counties that have experienced renewable energy development, and industry partners that have engaged in or been a part of renewable energy development. Both the Association of Oregon Counties and the Oregon Water Resources Congress are cross member affiliates. CREA supports economic improvement, clean energy awareness and community pride – all benefits of small scale local renewable energy development. Oregon's Renewable Portfolio standard is also a tool that CREA uses to create local opportunities in Oregon. Throughout Eastern Oregon small projects are sited alongside projects of much larger scale. We believe that with greater opportunity to permit small and mid-sized projects through the county permitting process, communities will gain more benefit from the development of renewable energy projects.

Our members, both counties and industry, are concerned with the EFSC process. It is overly cumbersome, expensive and time consuming.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2329 which seeks to modify the definition of "energy facility". By changing these thresholds, effectively increasing the opportunity for facilities to be permitted locally, you are increasing the opportunity for economic development and resiliency throughout Oregon.

Yours Very Truly,

Don Russell
Commissioner Morrow County
Chair Community Renewable Energy Association