

House Committee on Energy and Environment

Testimony in support of HB2329

Good Afternoon

Chair Ken Helm, VC E. Werner Reschke, VC Sheri Schouten, committee members Lynn Findley, Andrea Salinas, Janeen Sollman, Marty Wilde, Anna Williams, and Jack Zika

I am writing in strong support of HB2329. If passed it will allow additional pathways for photovoltaic power generation facilities to obtain land use entitlements. This will translate to opportunities that are currently not available in Oregon due to timeline and permitting costs that projects of certain megawatts can not support as required through the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) process.

Innovative project proposals are left off the table in the Oregon renewable energy market due to the gaps in feasible pathways for project development. The opportunity to perform due diligence for proposals above the 10MW size and below 40MW size in certain areas of Oregon are not possible currently due to land use hurdles.

Cypress Creek Renewables respects the Energy Facility Siting Council and Staff. We have tentative plans to take some larger projects through the process in the future. We realize there are benefits and challenges to siting through EFSC and County siting processes. Both avenues serve an important purpose and having the option to opt in/out of EFSC will add important fluidity and tools to further solar development opportunities in Oregon.

HB2329 is a strong example of Oregon leadership seeking to remove unnecessary hurdles to solar energy development. Our support for HB2329 is to encourage more opportunity for Oregon to partake in the economic development and renewable energy benefits that come with project proposals becoming operational in this state. Neighboring states with streamlined or fast-tracked processes for solar siting are more attractive than cumbersome and outdated siting review.

I have worked with 8 counties in the state to obtain 30 land use permits. The 8 counties include Crook, Jackson, Deschutes, Polk, Marion, Clackamas, Klamath, and Yamhill. The counties have strong development standards that all project developers are held accountable to. Experts and licensed professionals are involved at every stage of the permitting and development process. From our experience of siting projects all counties have County Planning Directors and/or staff that go above and beyond to implement collaborative informational methods to ensure responsible economic development for their county. At the county level we have access to the local and state experts on the ground, and we get the opportunity to forge strong working relationships where we can creatively discuss options and mitigations utilizing the local knowledge to benefit the process.

Developers are held to natural resource review on every project as all risk points are identified and analyzed. CCR's projects in Oregon either obtain a no impact letter from agencies or partake in

onsite consultation. Project due diligence is typically a 2-year (or more) timeline in advance of applying for the land use process. A heavy burden of extensive process and timeline does not equate to stronger mitigation it just equates to more process and timeline that can kill project opportunities which limits Oregon's renewable energy projects that will come to fruition.

CCR has successfully collaborated with ODFW & USFW on mandatory and voluntary wildlife mitigation plans through the county process. In Klamath County we have a mitigation plan that includes habitat improvement and the construction of a shaded precipitation catchment that is a wildlife drinking guzzler. In Clackamas county we worked with ODFW on a mitigation plan that will offset the project footprint by improving and managing an equal amount of land onsite for Elk and Deer browse. This process was extensive and collaborative with the local jurisdiction and state agency. The County staff, Hearings Officer and ODFW staff assisted us in ensuring that we adhered to following the Goal 5 resource requirements.

Photovoltaic infrastructure and construction of projects is simple. The solar farm development process in Oregon is complex with many hurdles. Additional options for siting and the removal of arbitrary roadblocks can lead to progressive creative responsible development. Streamline process will result in creative projects that will bring welcomed economic development dollars to counties that want to partake in responsible renewable energy development.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy Berg Pickett