



March 31, 2019

Representative Ken Helm  
House Committee on Energy and Environment  
Oregon State Legislature

RE: HB 2322

Dear Chair Helm and House Committee on Energy and Environment Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter and to voice our concern regarding the potential negative impacts of HB 2322. My husband and I reside in Yamhill County and we own Atticus Wine. While we completely support renewable energy, including photovoltaic solar, we strongly believe that we need to preserve high value farmland for agricultural production and we also need to preserve the beautiful character of our rural communities. We fear that HB 2322 could create unintended consequences and provide a future avenue to allow more development of energy facilities on agricultural lands, not currently permitted under current law and administrative rules, threatening our vibrant agricultural and agri-tourism economies, as well as our wine industry.

Renewable energy projects do not require agricultural lands. Solar panels, for example, can go anywhere including on top of existing structures, vacant industrial land, abandoned mill sites, and highway median strips, none of which would remove high value farmland from production. Moreover, renewable energy technology is advancing very quickly, significantly reducing the footprint requirements to generate energy.

Our open spaces are also key to the character of our rural communities and this character is not insured by the industrialization that would occur with the development of commercial solar and other industrial renewable energy projects that would be prioritized through HB 2322. In the 2018 Willamette Valley Visitor Profile Study conducted by the Willamette Valley Wineries Association (Attachment 1) one of the key reasons that compelled visitors to choose our area in addition to the wine was the scenic beauty. We cannot jeopardize that.

Instead of pushing for HB 2322, Oregon should be setting an example, nation-wide by continuing to embrace renewable energy but encouraging developers to be more creative and properly site their projects without the need to remove high value farmland from production or significantly alter the agricultural character of our communities. For example, in California, Forefront Power has been creating solar parking canopies like the one pictured below at Reedley College (Picture 1) which has a 2.8MW capacity. They have completed or have similar projects underway for the City of Paso Robles, UC Santa Cruz, and other colleges that are part of the State Center Community College District. Developers often say that they go after farmland because it is less expensive, so why not encourage developers to be more creative and build their projects in more appropriate locations throughout our state? There is no need to change current law to elevate the pursuit of renewable energy above farmland protection when there are other options.

Picture 1: Solar Canopy at Reedley College, California



As concerned members of our community, we are very interested and invested in the future development of our County and our beautiful state. HB 2322 provides energy developers special treatment and an easier path at the expense of protecting our farmland. We hope you will reconsider HB 2322 and all the negative consequences it could have for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

Ximena Orrego

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Atticus Wine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping tail.

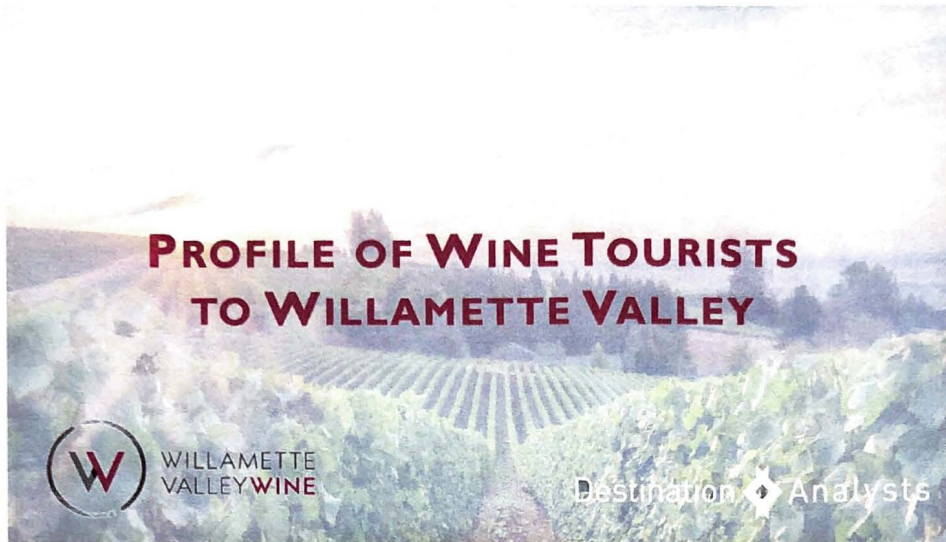
Atticus Wine

20501 NW Russell Creek Rd

Yamhill OR 97148



## Attachment 1 (Slide sub-set of overall Study)



### OBJECTIVE

Develop a deeper, comprehensive understanding of the audiences the Willamette Valley is attracting, as well as garner insights about the Willamette Valley destination brand in order to ultimately grow the positive impact of tourism to the AVA



### MARKETING THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

**The quality and variety of wine available in the Willamette Valley, its scenic beauty and wine tasting opportunities are prime factors in the choice to visit the region.** How easily accessible the region is, the concentration of wineries in the area and wine club members visiting or picking up wine at wineries also inspire trips to Willamette Valley.

