

Thank you for this opportunity.

My wife and I own a family farm of 1000 irrigated acres. As I testified in Baker City, We have been very progressive this past decade making changes trying to survive in a global economy.

The first Change was switching to No till and Strip till farming which promotes massive Carbon Sequestering into our soils. This required new farm implements, GPS guidance, and conversion to all sprinkler irrigation. Massive amounts of capital was spent and mostly recovered over the last ten years.

The Second Change was installing solar panels on the farm to produce electricity for our irrigation wells, shops, and houses. We currently have over 700,000 watts of solar panels at 26 meters. This last year was a first for us. We produced more than we used. The project costs of over 1.7 million, are paying back over a 10 year period.

With the changes made, I realized that not only was I more competitive but also had a negative carbon footprint. A WIN WIN.

Agriculture in Oregon can play a great role in lowering our state's carbon emissions. However change requires money, of which farmers are very short of. With profit margins around 2% and the just added CAT tax, taking a third of that profit, we have little money to make investments. Adding carbon taxes on us will make us completely unprofitable and unable to afford any changes let alone stay in business. Instead of taxing us out of business, we need to find a way to educate farmers on how to make changes that reduce CO2 and at the same time be globally competitive.

Legislation is needed that will protect Oregonians who invest in renewables on their farms or homes. Rules on net metering from utilities can change and make our investments go south. My utility Idaho Power just tried to change the rules such that the producer would get wholesale rates for when they put power on the grid, but pay retail when they take it back off, making solar unprofitable. In my part of the state rules prohibit me from having more than 100k watts of solar on one meter. This arbitrary rule makes it impossible for large irrigators to produce a meaningful share of their power. There needs to be a decision at the state level what the long term rules of net metering are going to be. Are Big utilities going to own, run, manage, and profit from renewables, or are we going to let every power user generate their own power at a price where rapid growth of solar can be adopted without unnecessary laws forcing it on people.

Any Questions?

