



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION

Presentation to the Joint Transportation Committee on
Senate Bill 38

February 2, 2021

Obstruction evaluations near airports

- ORS 836.535 requires the OR Department of Aviation to conduct evaluations on proposed structures near airports, but does not allow us to charge a fee.
- ODA does about **1100** of these evaluations per year. Mostly power transmission lines, wind turbines, communication towers and construction cranes.
- We assess impacts on airports and air traffic patterns.
- Each evaluation can take from 20 minutes to 20 hours, depending on complexity.



Example 1 – Sisters Airport

- Proposed residential subdivision adjacent to the Sisters Airport.
- 38 residential lots and existing structures
- Some structures in or near the Runway Protection Zone and the protected airspace for the runway approach
- Each structure has to have a separate evaluation due to height and distance from the runway.



Sisters Airport proposed residential

Example 2 – Golden Hills Wind Farm

- Planned Wind Farm with 267 proposed turbines near Wasco, OR.
- Nearby wind farms have average turbine height of 200' above ground level.
- Golden Hills evaluation of 57 turbines, proposed height **499-656'** AGL.
- Will be some of the tallest wind turbines in the US, and will affect approach and departure operations at Wasco Airport.
- One evaluation for each structure.



The future of wind energy

- The federal government is once again prioritizing clean energy development.
- There are 46 wind farms in OR, plus 4 under construction (per ODoE).
- The area east of the Columbia River Gorge has a concentration of wind farms and abundant wind resources.
- Tallest Wind turbine in US is 653' AGL, at West TX A&M University
- Newest generation of commercial turbines are 500-650' tall, and many power companies are upgrading existing structures.



West TX A&M University Wind turbine

SB 38

- ODA does about 1100 evaluations per year.
- SB 38 would allow the Dept. of Aviation to establish a fee for obstruction evaluations, via administrative rule.
- Fee is expected to be a flat fee of about \$100 per structure (just enough to recover the cost of staff time).
- Airport-owned and FAA-owned structures (such as rotating beacons and navigational aids) would be exempt.



La Grande Airport Beacon

QUESTIONS?