



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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March 28, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
RE: HB 3179

Chair Helm, Vice-chairs Hartman and Owens, Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is Oregon's largest state-centric hunter conservation organization, representing 10,000 sportsmen and women throughout 26 chapters in the state. Our mission statement is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage' and we have a strong history of advocating for science-based wildlife management.

While we recognize the need for increased renewable energy projects, OHA has several concerns related to the reduction in oversight by Oregon's Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC), as well as reduced wildlife and habitat protections.

HB 3179 with the -2 amendment seeks to double the acreage thresholds of renewable energy projects. Scaling up these acreage thresholds results in the EFSC only having authority over projects larger than 3,840 acres on lands not classified as farmland. As written, the bill also removes EFSC oversight on projects located on Federal lands. This is specifically alarming with the Bureau of Land Management currently considering expanding its "Western Solar Plan" to Oregon.

OHA is concerned that the removal of EFSC oversight in this manner effectively circumvents an existing process that allows for better stakeholder engagement, transparency, and consideration of cumulative effects in relation to wildlife species and habitat mitigation.

In general, these projects are developed with high fences around the outer perimeter of the operations for security purposes. These fences, while necessary, create physical barriers and obstacles to both migrating and resident wildlife essentially resulting in a permanent loss of habitat for species like deer, elk and pronghorn.

The reduction in wildlife and habitat protections, in lieu of vague language regarding mitigation impacts, and the state's ability to review projects on Federal lands are just as concerning as the increased acreage thresholds.

According to the State Biennial Energy Report, Oregon has met approximately 50% of the clean energy by 2050 goals. While we understand the urgency to reach the remaining portion of the goal percentage, wildlife and habitat needs must not be thrown aside to achieve the mission. There is time, and ability, to thoughtfully consider siting requirements for new renewable energy projects.

Thank you,
Amy Patrick
Policy Director