



# Oregon

Tina Kotek., Governor

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**To:** The Honorable Ken Helm, Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural  
Resources, and Water



## House Bill 3181

Debbie Colbert, Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) appreciates this opportunity to provide information relevant to the House Bill 3181 - 1 amendments and has no position on the bill or amendments.

As Oregon progresses toward its renewable energy goals to address climate change, the State has maintained its commitment to responsibly siting projects to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts fish and wildlife habitats. HB 3181-1 would direct the Oregon Department of Energy and Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development to establish the Finding Opportunities and Reducing Conflicts in Energy Siting process. The -1 amendment would also provide \$5 million for counties to resource, improve, and expedite their processes with relation to siting and \$2 million for communities and Tribes to engage in siting work.

ODFW has been actively engaged in collaborative planning efforts such as the Oregon Energy Siting Policy Conversation with the goal of siting renewable energy siting in zones of lesser conflict. The -1 amendment to HB 3181 keeps this momentum and invests in the conversation needed now to ensure the state meets its 100% clean energy goals in a way that balances Oregonian's values and needs for communities, fish and wildlife habitat, and resource land protection.

**Thoughtful siting is key to avoiding and minimizing impacts to priority wildlife resources for the State and county Goal 5 natural resources.** In the Siting Policy Conversation, ODFW has been providing data and technical assistance regarding sensitive species and habitats, migration corridors, and wildlife connectivity which can be negatively impacted by solar developments in terms of fencing, road and facility construction, vegetation removal, and human disturbance. ODFW has also been contributing innovative concepts to help streamline and improve efficacy of habitat mitigation solutions when impacts to wildlife habitat are unavoidable. Solar projects with robust wildlife avoidance and mitigation strategies are moving forward in the current regulatory framework, which affords Oregon the time and opportunity to fulfill the goals of HB 3181-1.

The state has already made substantial progress in siting renewable energy projects; **there is still time for the thoughtful and strategic planning needed to meet clean energy goals.** To date, more than 57,000 acres of solar have been permitted, are under review, or have been built since 2011 (4,485 MW; 90 square miles). This accounts for nearly half of the 100% clean energy goal by 2050 scenario described in the [State's Biennial Energy Report 2022](#). Oregon would benefit from a strong statewide energy strategy to optimize pathways to meet our clean energy goals, prioritize equity, and balance tradeoffs with resource protection. HB 3181-1 is a component of a statewide energy strategy, aligning the “where” of renewable energy siting across diverse values and needs.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide background on this bill. **Renewable energy resources are vital to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is vital that the state take the time to engage thoughtfully on how to achieve Oregon's renewable energy goals.**

**CONTACTS:**

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