



March 25, 2025

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 3422 – Support

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba, Levy, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 3858. Central Oregon LandWatch (“LandWatch”) is a land use and conservation advocacy organization that, for more than 35 years, has protected Central Oregon’s farm and forest lands, rivers and springs, fish and wildlife, and vibrant communities. We work to conserve the region’s ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and working rural lands balanced with a responsible, sustainable approach to planning and fostering thriving communities.

LandWatch supports HB 3422. The bill would put review of energy facilities at the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) on parity with review of such facilities during the local government land use approval process. This would happen by adding one line of text to ORS 469.504(2)(c), which governs when EFSC may grant an exception to the 19 statewide land use planning goals, that would require EFSC to find that “[a]reas that do not require a new exception cannot reasonably accommodate the proposed facility[.]” HB 3422 (2025) at Section 1.

Oregon is losing farm and forest lands at concerning rates, due largely to county approval of new rural low-density housing, and the siting of large energy facilities. Oregon needs to site new renewable energy facilities, and LandWatch overall supports renewable energy development. However, as in all things related to land use, *where* matters. The commonsense solution proposed by HB 3422 would require energy facilities developers to first seek out lands that do not require a new goal exception before turning to farm and forest land for siting new facilities. Perhaps inevitably, some farm and forest land in Oregon will need to be converted to renewable energy use in order to meet our state’s energy goals. But these lands should not be the first priority for energy development.

HB 3422 is a commonsense solution that aligns with the goal exceptions process already applicable to cities and counties’ review of energy development. We urge this committee to pass HB 3422.

Regards,

Rory Isbell
Staff Attorney & Rural Lands Program Director
Central Oregon LandWatch

