

Submitter: John D. Lee
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1034
To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
From:
Re: SB 1034 Amending ORS 469.504, Energy facility land use compliance
Date: March 31, 2025

Chair Stollman, Vice-Chair Smith and Committee Members:

1) support for SB 1034 puts local control in land use codes over a state agency. EFSC would need to follow local land use codes for siting energy facilities. This affects every county, much as the Oregon Supreme court decision was state wide.

Please register me, John D. Lee, as a supporter of SB 1034.

I am a 4th generation Umatilla County farmer and all generations before me back to British Colonial Virginia were farmers. I love the land, the farming experience, the pride of a crop well planted and harvested. I am proud to say that my Great Grandfather came to Oregon after serving in the Civil War on a wagon train in 1867. He set up a homestead on Dry Creek in NE Umatilla County raising cattle and later wheat, he was one of the earliest settlers in the area. My family has a tight connection to the land and all aspects of it for over 154 years in Oregon. I hope that you can see that my opinion is credible when it comes to land use in Umatilla County and around the state, as our family considers ourselves good stewards of the land.

I support SB 1034 as I feel that it will protect this land and the land of our Dry Creek Valley for generations to come from the abuse of wind farm production efforts in our area. Wildfires are of my greatest concern as our farm sits in an unprotected fire zone between Athena/Weston and Milton-Freewater. We are at the mercy of any help we can get from fellow farmers and friends fighting wheat and weed fires in steep valleys blocked by weed-covered empty rail cars inside our Dry Creek Valley in violation of Oregon Exclusive Farm Use laws. Last summer there were four such fires that hit our valley. Do we need additional fire risks from concentrated wind farms in our area which has officially been designated a wildfire region inside a non-

protected fire zone?

My family lives at the Dry Creek homestead south of Milton-Freewater, along with three of my four grandsons, all of whom are 6th generation Lee future farmers. This is personal. We are land owners who live on site at our family farms. When any natural disaster hits in this region from lightning strikes, farm production fires, wildfires, earthquakes and floods, we are at risk in every way. Why add to the fire risk by concentrating additional windmills next to our place of work, our livelihood, our home, our farm investments of over 154 years, and our families which we love?

I reviewed the list of testimonies to SB 1034. Ironically, those who oppose it as testifying as representatives of several wind farms located in the northern Mid-Columbia region near the Columbia River. That's it. My father-in-law had a ranch near Dufur in Wasco County within this region. We take note of fires there in the past and during recent times; Wasco County has suffered greatly from wildfires. People have lost their equipment, farmsteads, homes and lives from these fires. We have watched the news in horror observing the intensity of these fires and the inability to fight them due to strong winds in that region. Why on earth would we advocate for a greater concentration of windmills in wind farms after seeing recently in technicolor what these fires can do?

The windmills in this region are getting older. This means a greater chance of fires from equipment. These same windmills will soon be ready for the gigantic landfills that will contain them all over Oregon. We have seen one such mess near Walla Walla. Trust me, you would not want to have them in your backyard but they will be headed your way! Google it, it is not a pretty sight for Oregon to assume as a tradeoff for more gigantic windmills.

Please register me as a supporter of SB 1034.

Sincerely,
John D. Lee
85045 Hawthorne Lane
Milton-Freewater, Oregon