



IN REPLY REFER TO:

## United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Klamath Basin Area Office  
6600 Washburn Way  
Klamath Falls, OR 97603-9365



KO-100  
2.2.3.15 (LND-1.10)

Mr. Erik Nobel  
Klamath County Planning  
305 Main Street  
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

Subject: Response for Proposed Solar Ordinance  
Dear Mr. Nobel:

The Klamath Basin Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has reviewed Klamath County's proposed solar ordinance, and offers the following comment:

The stated purpose of the ordinance's prohibition of commercial solar development on Class I, II, and III soils or land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use is to preserve agricultural land. Although Reclamation agrees that preservation of agricultural land is a worthy goal, the draft ordinance appears to make an erroneous assumption that commercial solar development and agriculture are mutually exclusive uses.

On the contrary, there is a growing field of "agrisolar" or "agrivoltaics" that integrates solar photovoltaics on agricultural land for the benefit of both uses, including increased land-use and resource efficiency, the preservation of agricultural land, reduced water consumption, improved crop yields, potential to increase soil carbon sequestration, the provision of ecosystem services, and contributions to the socio-economic welfare of rural communities.

Affordability of electrical power for agricultural use has been a concern in Klamath County since the 2006 expiration of a favorable power contract with PacifiCorp resulted in rate increases up to 2,000 percent. Affordable power is needed to flexibly move water around the Klamath Basin to maximize its use in agriculture and to provide water for wildlife habitat. Reclamation has twice studied potential methods for developing affordable agricultural power and has determined that solar photovoltaic power remains among the most viable options. Foreclosing the opportunity to develop commercial solar power in close proximity to agriculture would harm Klamath Basin irrigators and wildlife resources.

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CALIFORNIA\*, NEVADA\*, OREGON\*

\* PARTIAL

EXHIBIT A V  
FILE # CU7 8-20

Reclamation urges the Planning Commission to reconsider this aspect of the proposed ordinance, and to develop alternative language that permits commercial solar development on agricultural land under circumstances that are beneficial to both uses.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Mr. Michael Neuman at (541) 880-2547 or via electronic mail at [mneuman@usbr.gov](mailto:mneuman@usbr.gov).

Sincerely,

**JARED**  
**BOTTCHER**

Digitally signed by JARED  
BOTTCHER  
Date: 2021.10.14  
09:37:59 -07'00'

Jared Bottcher  
Acting Area Manager



Oregon Operations

6400 Highway 66 Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601  
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www.greendiamond.com

October 27, 2020

Planning Commission Members  
Klamath County  
305 Main Street  
Klamath Falls, OR 97601

Re: Klamath Commercial Solar Ordinance

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed ordinance for siting Commercial Solar Projects in Klamath County.

Green Diamond Resource Company is a privately held forest products company, founded in 1890, which today owns and manages 1.8 million acres of working forest land in nine states, including 660,000 acres of working forest land in Oregon. Nearly 435,000 acres are located in Klamath County and we operate an area office in Klamath Falls, with 50 employees and several contractors handling harvest, reforestation and other activities on our landscape. Green Diamond is in discussion with two solar project developers in addition to other energy project developers, with plans to move forward as feasibility is determined. These projects are aimed at portions of our timberlands that deliver marginal value for timber growth. We are looking for the best value to our shareholders over the long term, and searching out such projects which provide revenue for marginal lands is simply prudent business practice. At the same time, development of these sites provides much-needed local jobs and tax revenue for Klamath County.

Green Diamond provided general feedback in August, 2019 as the planning commission considered criteria for siting solar projects. We appreciate the opportunity to provide additional comment as you consider specific language for the proposed ordinance. Specifically:

Section 89.020 – Zoning Requirements

The stated purpose of these requirements is to: *preserve the best agricultural lands in Klamath County, preserve residential, commercial and industrial areas within the Urban Growth Boundary.* However, paragraph 1d refers to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Crucial Habitat Map. Winter range areas on this map cover extremely wide swaths of forestland, protection of which is not included under the stated purpose of the zoning requirements. According to information published by the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, 81 percent of Klamath County is forested, providing ample range for wildlife. Forest landowners should not be penalized for providing excellent wildlife habitat.

EXHIBIT *AW*  
FILE # *C1UP 8-20*

Within large tracts of forestland, siting a commercial solar project in an area with marginal value should be allowed as a best use of such an area, whether or not it lies within the mapped ODFW crucial habitat range. Landowners should be afforded flexibility to site projects as appropriate.

Consideration for wildlife habitat is included elsewhere in the proposed ordinance, under Section 89.030 – Application Requirements, subsection 4. This allows for the important consideration of wildlife impacts but provides flexibility in siting.

In our letter dated August 13, 2019, we urge you to consider limiting your ordinance to agricultural lands, in order to meet the goal of “preserving the best agricultural lands in Klamath County for farming and ranching” as stated in your draft language to be added to the Land Development Code. The zoning requirements in the draft ordinance now include industrial and residential lands. These considerations are understandable. We still hold that forestland should be excluded from the ordinance. At a minimum, we ask that the Planning Commission remove subsection 89.020.1.a. from the proposed ordinance.

Thank you for your interest in our operations. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



John Davis  
Vice President & General Manager

Cc: Klamath County Commissioners