



January 16, 2025

Sherman County Court
500 Court Street
Moro, OR 97039

Re: Comments on Sherman County Solar Ordinance

Dear Judge Dabulskis, Commissioner Bird, and Commissioner Miller:

Renewable NW is a regional, non-profit renewable energy advocacy organization, dedicated to accelerating the transition to renewable electricity while maintaining reliable, resilient electricity service and reasonable rates. Our members are a combination of renewable energy businesses and environmental and consumer groups.

For many years, Renewable NW has admired how Sherman County government ensures its citizens benefit from the development of renewable energy projects. Beyond the new public facilities and low taxes on other property, the annual payments to every citizen are unique and creative. At the same time, these benefits do not diminish the reality of a changing landscape in Sherman County and how that impacts the livelihoods of its citizens. We acknowledge the County's role and responsibility to consider ordinances that will balance the costs and benefits of solar development.

Striking this balance will take time. We are worried the current process does not have sufficient space to allow for a full conversation that considers all potential impacts of the proposed solar ordinance. Given that the proposed changes are a potentially drastic departure from Sherman County's previous approach to renewable energy development, we encourage the County to slow down the process to ensure the County Court has all relevant information and potential alternative options to formulate a balanced resolution. A modest delay of just a month or two will allow more time for the County Court to consider the broad set of public comments and viewpoints and gather any needed analysis. We suggest this time would also allow for sufficient consideration of the following:

- Estimate how much the proposed setbacks will limit solar development and associated tax revenue for Sherman County.
- Gather information about setbacks for solar projects in other rural counties across eastern Washington and Oregon.

- Learn more about how local county ordinances interact with state regulatory guidance, including EFSC.
- Discuss whether any of the concerns about solar projects can be addressed in other ways.
- Consider additional creative options to distribute tax revenue from solar projects more broadly.

Renewable NW recognizes the important work ahead of the County. We offer our support, as the County sees fit, such as by offering examples and any insights we or our membership might have on lessons learned in other counties. We would welcome the opportunity to partner with the County on this important work and arrive at a balanced solution.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of the ideas in this letter further.

Sincerely,

Adam Capage
Outreach & Communications Director

cc: Judge Joe Dabulskis