

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to SB0344, which would extend the deadline for community solar energy projects to qualify for agricultural use property tax assessments.

While clean energy development is important, this bill unfairly reduces tax revenue for local governments by allowing landowners to continue receiving agricultural tax benefits for land that is increasingly being used for commercial solar operations rather than farming. This extension could disincentivize genuine agricultural production and shift the burden of funding local services onto other property owners.

Additionally, the bill creates a loophole that could be exploited, allowing solar developers to benefit from preferential tax treatment for long periods without clear requirements to maintain active agricultural use. Local governments rely on property tax revenue to fund schools, infrastructure, and emergency services; SB0344 would weaken that revenue stream while providing financial advantage to a relatively small group of landowners and developers.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject SB0344 and prioritize policies that balance clean energy growth with fair taxation and support for genuine farming activities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Thompson