



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Board Session Agenda Review Form

Meeting date: January 28, 2026

Department: Public Works

Title: Receive notice of the Hearings Officer decision denying Administrative Review 25-015/Remington BESS, LLC.

Management Update/Work Session Date: N/A Audio/Visual aids ☐

Time Required: 0 min Contact: John Speckman Phone: 503-566-4174

Requested Action: Receive notice of the Hearings Officer decision denying Administrative Review 25-015/Remington BESS, LLC.

Issue, Description & Background: The Marion County Hearings Officer held a duly noticed hearing on the application on November 6, 2025. The Hearings Officer issued a decision on January 21, 2026 denying Administrative Review 25-015.

As part of the land use process, the Marion County Board of Commissioners must receive official notice of the decision.

Financial Impacts: None

Impacts to Department & External Agencies: None

List of attachments: HO Decision

Presenter: John Speckman

Department Head Signature: for Brandon Reed

BEFORE THE MARION COUNTY HEARINGS OFFICER

In the Matter of the Application of)	Case No. 25-015
Remington BESS LLC, on behalf of the)	
Neils Paul Jensen and Imma L. Jensen Joint)	ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
Revocable Trust.)	

ORDER

I. Nature of the Application

This matter came before the Marion County Hearings Officer on the Application of Remington BESS, LLC, on behalf of the Neils Paul Jensen and Irma L. Jensen Joint Revocable Trust for an administrative review to construct a battery energy storage system as a utility facility necessary for public service on a 15-acre portion of a 133.77-acre parcel located in the 5200 block of Pearson Rd SE, Turner (T9S; R2W; Section 20D; Tax Lot 100 and T9S; R2W; Section 21C; Tax lots 100 & 200).

II. Relevant Criteria

The standards and criteria relevant to this Application are found in Oregon Revised Statutes, and the Marion County Code (MCC), Title 17, especially MCC 17.136 (Exclusive Use Zone).

III. Hearing

A public hearing was held on this matter on November 6, 2025. At the hearing, the Planning Division file was made a part of the record. The record includes the following Pre-Hearing submissions and additional material:

1. Remington BESS, LLC Pre-Hearing Brief with Alternatives Analysis Appendix and Exhibits 1-22 (Received October 31, 2025)
2. Remington BESS, LLC BESS Mitigation (Received November 3, 2025)
3. Testimony from John J. Audley in Support of Application to Site a Battery Energy Storage System in Marion County (Received November 5, 2025)
4. Santiam Water Control District Comments (Received November 5, 2025)

The following persons appeared and provided testimony:

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|----|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | John Speckman | Marion County Planning Division |
| 2. | Ryan Thomas | Attorney for Applicant |
| 3. | Christina Gispert | Applicant Representative |
| 4. | Brent Stevenson | Santiam Water Control District |

No objections were raised to notice, jurisdiction, conflict of interest, or to evidence or testimony presented at the hearing. No documents were entered into the record as exhibits.

The record was held open to allow the parties to provide supplemental comments. The following submissions were received:

November 13, 2025: Santiam Water Control District Supplemental Comments to Remington BESS Administrative Review 25-015

November 20, 2025: Applicant's Response to Santiam Water Control District Comments on BESS Project submitted by Ryan Thomas

IV. Executive Summary

Applicant requests an administrative review to place a battery energy storage system ("BESS") on Exclusive Farm Use ("EFU") zoned land as a utility facility necessary for public service (the "Project").

The Planning Director denied the application, and Remington BESS, LLC appealed on the basis that (1) a battery energy storage system is a utility facility necessary for public service, and (2) Remington BESS, LLC complied with ORS 215.275 in demonstrating it considered reasonable alternatives to siting the project in the EFU zone. Remington BESS, LLC also argues that to the extent the denial was predicated upon Marion County Ordinance 1480, which bans BESS in all County zone designations, Ordinance 1480 is invalid on its face and does not apply to the current application because the application was submitted prior to the adoption of Ordinance 1480.

Evidence submitted by Applicant, including expert testimony, establishes that electrical utilities incorporated the use of energy storage systems, including BESS, into their integrated resource and clean energy planning. The Project would provide battery energy storage services to the PacifiCorp's electrical grid. The evidence suggests that BESS may be beneficial, efficient, and may advance important energy objectives, including clean power and meeting renewable energy targets.

The term "utility facility," as used in ORS 215.283(1)(c) and MCC 17.110.584 refers to infrastructure that directly delivers a utility service to the public. The proposed BESS functions solely as energy storage. The proposed BESS would interact with the electric grid, but support of a utility system is not the equivalent of providing a utility service. PacifiCorp will continue to provide service without the proposed BESS.

Under ORS 215.283(1)(c), ORS 215.275, and MCC 17.110.584, benefit, efficiency, or contribution to broader policy goals does not establish necessity. Because a privately owned BESS does not deliver electric service and does not require EFU siting to function, it does not meet the legal standard, even if it provides ancillary or system-wide benefits.

The application for an administrative review to construct a battery energy storage system as a utility facility necessary for public service is DENIED.

V. Findings of Fact

The hearings officer, after careful consideration of the testimony and evidence in the record, issues the following findings of fact:

1. The subject property is designated Primary Agriculture in the Marion County Comprehensive Plan. The major purpose of this designation and the corresponding Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zone is to promote the continuation of commercial agricultural and forestry operations.
2. The property is located on the northern side of Pearson Rd SE within a half mile of the intersection with Parrish Gap Rd SE. The proposed area for the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is the approximately 15 acres north of the PacifiCorp Parrish Gap Substation which is located on Pearson Rd SE, east-adjacent to the property at 5387 Pearson. The proposed area is in agricultural use for either grass seed or hay production with the rest of the 133.77-acre parcel. There are two mapped perennial streams and one mapped intermittent stream across the subject parcel. Based on the site plan, the BESS would be sited upon the southernmost perennial stream and the intermittent stream, as well as being nearly adjacent to the northern perennial stream. All three of these flow into canals managed by the Santiam Water Control District for the purpose of providing water rights to farmers in the district.

The subject property was itself the subject of a property line adjustment in 2008 (PLA08-044) which clarifies that the 46.35-acre tax lot upon which the BESS is proposed is itself part of a larger 133.77-acre parcel consisting of three tax lots (T9S; R2W; Section 20D; Tax Lot 100 and T9S; R2W; Section 21C; Tax lots 100 & 200). The property line adjustment was between two parcels, and yielded a 5-acre parcel which contains the homesite at 5387 Pearson Rd SE (not involved in this application) and the 133.77-acre parcel upon which the 15-acre BESS is proposed by this application. While the subject parcel consists of three tax lots, it appears by all indications that PLA08-044 was completed and therefore the subject parcel is legal for land use purposes.

3. Surrounding uses are agricultural and residential. Lands north and east of the subject parcel are in the EFU zone and devoted to large scale agriculture, particularly of grass seed and hay. Lands directly to the south are in the SA (Special Agriculture) zone and in use for agriculture and rural homesites. On the other side of those SA zoned lands is a relatively dense neighborhood of AR (Acreage Residential) zoned parcels. To the west of the subject parcel is another parcel in agricultural use in conjunction with the subject parcel, and a parcel in rural residential use. Those parcels are bordered by Parrish Gap Rd SE, and west of Parrish Gap is the southeastern corner of a large (approximately 375-acre) AR zoned area devoted to rural residences and hobby farms.

The lands to the north and east, devoted to agricultural purposes, are mostly devoid of trees, and east of Duckflat Rd SE is a significant area of wetlands (both natural and manmade). The lands to the west and south of the subject parcel, and specifically south of Pearson Rd and West of Parrish Gap, are relatively densely developed and densely treed lands.

4. Applicant proposes to place a battery energy storage system (BESS) on a 15-acre area of the subject parcel to store electricity.
5. The subject parcel is comprised of approximately 63.5% high value soils. The proposed 15-acre project area is primarily sited upon class 2 Abiqua silty clay loam, class 2 McAlpin silty clay loam, and class 3 Waldo silty clay loam.
6. Various agencies were contacted with the proposal and given an opportunity to comment.

Marion County Building Department commented: "No Building Inspection concerns. Structural permit is not required as the energy storage facility is for utility purposes and not subject to the requirements of the 2022 OSSC. Separate electrical permit(s) is required to be obtained prior to development."

Marion County Land Development, Engineering and Permits requested the following be included:

ENGINEERING REQUIREMENTS

- A. At the time of application for building permits an Access Permit will be required. In order to achieve maximum intersection sight distance, the access approach shall be situated as close to directly opposing the driveway serving #5288 Pearson Rd, as feasible, based upon preliminary field observation.
- B. Stormwater detention may be required upon 0.5-acres or more of development.
- C. The subject property is within the unincorporated area of Marion County and will be assessed Transportation System Development Charges (SDCs) upon application for building permits.
- D. Utility work in the public right-of-way, such as electrical Point of Interconnection (POI) serving the facility, requires a separate PW Engineering permit.

Marion County Fire District No.1 commented regarding fire code requirements. These comments are found in full in the case file.

Friends of Marion County provided comments on the proposal and specifically requested denial because a BESS is not a utility facility, is not necessary for public service, is not a commercial power generation facility, and because appropriate conditions have not been developed. The full comments from FOMC are found in the case file. FOMC also submitted six exhibits:

- (1) Tax assessor information for Tax Account No. 535412
- (2) 2025-2025 Property Tax Account No. 535412,
- (3) The applicant's site plan
- (4) A map of PGE substations located in Marion County,
- (5) EFSC Meeting May 2. 2025 Agenda Item C Overview of Battery Energy Storage Systems
- (6) The agenda review form for the June 11, 2025 Marion County Board of Commissioners session to discuss BESS, including a memo with proposed new code language that was subsequently adopted on July 9, 2025

The FOMC exhibits are found in full in the case file.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife commented: "Prior to site development (grading, vegetation management), the applicant should complete grassland bird surveys. Disturbance to nesting grassland birds should be minimized by limiting these actions so that they occur outside of the breeding season (April 1 – July 15)."

Santiam Water Control District (SWCD) commented with concerns regarding adverse impacts on water quality from construction stormwater, adverse impacts on water quality from increased impervious surfaces, adverse impacts on water quality due to pollutants from the BESS operation, and adverse impacts on farm use. SWCD explains that the area proposed for the BESS has water rights that will need to be transferred. The property has a water pump that will be oversized for the reduced water right and without modification would dispense an illegal amount of water after the forfeiture of the existing water right. Therefore, SWCD will require an SWCD-approved method of measuring water use on the property.

SWCD suggested conditions of approval if the county were to approve the proposal. SWCD's proposed conditions of approval, as stated by Planning, are as follows:

- A. The applicant shall construct on-site stormwater detention facilities sufficient for a 50-year storm event.
- B. The applicant shall enter into a consent agreement with SWCD.
- C. The applicant shall provide environmental planning for review by the County and SWCD to ensure that no pollution from the proposed BESS enters the drainage ditch and/or SWCD facilities.
- D. The landowner shall deed its interest in the SWCD Water back to SWCD.
- E. The property owner shall amend its SWCD water delivery contract to exclude the 15-acres.

- F. The property owner shall install an SWCD-approved method of measuring water use on the property.

The entire comment submitted by SWCD is included in the case file.

Turner Fire District has reviewed this project and has the following comments.

1. Fire service features including fire apparatus access and fire protection water supplies are required to comply with the 2022 Oregon Fire Code (OFC). In order to assist applicants, design professionals, and developers, fire agencies throughout Marion County have provided the 2024 Marion County Fire Code Applications Guide (MCFCAG). The following links to the OFC and the MCFCAG are provided as follows.
 - a. The 2022 Oregon Fire Code contains the currently adopted fire and life safety regulations for the State of Oregon. The full text of the OFC is available through the International Code Council's website at the following link:
<https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/ORFC2022P1>
 - b. The 2024 Marion County Fire Code Applications Guide contains guidelines established by the fire agencies throughout Marion County to assist designers and applicants with how OFC requirements are to be applied to their projects. The following link to the 2024 MCFCAG is provided on the Turner Fire District website: Click the "Public Information" link at the bottom of the main page. Click the "Rural Access Standards" link. This opens the MCFCAG document which is located at the following link:
[https://www.turnerfire.com/content/files/M_C%20App%20Guide%207-2024\(3\).pdf](https://www.turnerfire.com/content/files/M_C%20App%20Guide%207-2024(3).pdf)
2. OFC 505 Address identification signs shall be provided.
3. OFC 506 Key box(s) is/are to be installed in an approved location where access to or within a structure or an area is necessary for lifesaving or fire-fighting purposes when required by the fire code official. NOTE: TFD does not require key boxes. However, *if occupants choose* to secure property, facilities, structures, or areas in such a manner which will inhibit immediate fire access, key boxes if installed, shall be of a design approved by Turner Fire District.
4. OFC 509 Fire protection equipment, gas shutoff valves, electric meters, service switches, and other utility equipment shall be clearly identified, readily visible, and legibly marked in an approved manner. Rooms containing controls shall be identified for the use of the fire department. Signs shall be constructed of durable materials, permanently installed, and maintained.
5. OFC 1207 Electrical energy storage systems (ESS) shall be in accordance with OFC Chapter 12 and specifically section 1207.

All other agencies either declined to comment or stated no objection to the proposal.

7. On April 15, 2025, the Marion County Board of Commissioners held a work session to discuss Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). BESS are not expressly contemplated in county zoning code, state statute or state administrative rule. The Marion County Board of Commissioners determined that a BESS is not a “Utility Facility Necessary for Public Service” as found in MCC 17.137.040(I), and that furthermore there is no use identified in the Marion County Code under which a BESS could be considered.

The Board of Commissioners determined to clarify the applicability of existing code to allow BESS. On May 14, 2025, the Board initiated a process to consider code amendments. On June 11, 2025, the Board held a hearing to consider amendments to clarify existing code provisions related to BESS in the Marion County Urban and Rural Zone Codes (MCC) Chapters 16 and 17.

The Marion County Board of Commissioners signed Ordinance 1480 on July 9, 2025. The Board sought to add clarifying sections of text in Chapters 16 and 17 of the Marion County Code to specifically prohibit BESS in Marion County. The Board indicated that the sections of code prohibiting BESS were added for clarification only because BESS were not permitted under any section of code prior to July 9, 2025.

8. Applicant filed its application for Administrative Review pursuant to MCC 17.136.040 which allows for the certain uses in the EFU zone subject to approval based on satisfaction of the standards and criteria specified for each use pursuant to MCC 17.115. MCC 17.136.040(I), subject to specific criteria, allows for the use of utility facilities necessary for public service, including wetland waste treatment systems, but not including commercial facilities for the purpose of generating electrical power for public use by sale or transmission towers over 200 feet in height. A facility is “necessary” if it must be situated in the EFU zone in order for the service to be provided.

9. Applicant’s proposed project is the construction and operation of the Remington Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) to be situated on approximately 15 acres of private property, located approximately 8 miles southeast of Salem. The Project would consist of battery containers, transformers, inverters, transmission lines, access roads, fencing, and associated infrastructure. The Project is intended to deliver electricity to the PacifiCorp transmission system via existing transmission infrastructure and associated utility easements and would interconnect to the existing Parrish Gap Substation immediately to the south of the proposed Project area.

Applicant states that states that Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are a necessary and essential part of Oregon’s energy infrastructure and future. Oregon House Bill 2021 sets renewable energy targets, and to meet the targets, the Oregon legislature and the Oregon Department of Energy require the integration and development of BESS. Electric utilities, like PacifiCorp and Portland General Electric, have cited the need for

additional storage sources in their clean energy and integrated resource planning. BESS collect electric energy generated from energy sources, including electrical grid, wind, solar, geothermal sources, and store the energy for a period of time in rechargeable batteries, and then release it back to the grid to provide electricity to residential and commercial users. (Applicant's Brief, Exhibits 6-10)

10. PacifiCorp's 2025 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) and siting requests indicated a need for BESS. The 2025 Oregon Situs RFP, which was approved by Oregon's Public Utilities Commission and is the means by which PacifiCorp must procure resources described in the IRP, specifically calls for energy storage resources, including at least 509 megawatts of new 4-hour lithium-ion battery storage resources needed in PacifiCorp's Oregon service territory by the end of 2029. Applicant states that the BESS Project is designed to respond to this need by providing 199 megawatts of 4-hour duration storage and by coming online before December 2029. (Applicant's Brief, Exhibits 12-17, Appendix A).
11. Applicant posits that BESS are necessary for the operation of the modern grid and essential to achieving the state's renewable energy targets. Applicant argues that state laws and policies demonstrate that BESS are utility facilities necessary for public service.

VI. Additional Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

1. Applicants have the burden of proving all applicable standards and criteria are met. As explained in *Riley Hill General Contractor, Inc. v. Tandy Corporation*, 303 Or 390 at 394-95 (1987):

“Preponderance of the evidence” means the greater weight of evidence. It is such evidence that, when weighed with that opposed to it, has more convincing force and is more probably true and accurate. If, upon any question in the case, the evidence appears to be equally balanced, or if you cannot say upon which side it weighs heavier, you must resolve that question against the party upon whom the burden of proof rests.

Applicant must prove, by substantial evidence in the whole record, that it is more likely than not that each criterion is met. If the evidence for any criterion is equally likely or less likely Applicant have not met their burden, and the application must be denied. If the evidence for every criterion is in Applicant's favor, then the burden of proof is met.

2. Applicant argues that County Ordinance 1480 (the “Ordinance”), which bans BESS in all County zone designations, does not apply to the current application. Applicant argues that the Ordinance is void because it conflicts with the plain language set forth in ORS 215.283(1). Applicant also argues that the Ordinance was not in effect at the time the application was submitted and cannot be applied as a standard and criteria that were not in effect at the time the application was submitted.

3. Ordinance 1480 added MCC 16.01.050 which states: Notwithstanding any other provision in this code, a commercial battery energy storage system, which uses batteries to store electrical energy for use on the electrical grid, is not allowed in any zone. This prohibition does not apply to personal battery storage systems that do not primarily store power for public use or sale. MCC 16.01.050 prohibits BESS in Marion County.
4. Ordinance 1480 was adopted on July 9, 2025. Applicant's application was submitted on June 30, 2025. Because the application pre-dates the Ordinance, the Hearings Officer considers (1) whether a BESS is a utility facility under Marion County Code; (2) whether a BESS is a utility facility that is permissible in the Exclusive Farm Use zone under ORS 215.283(1)(c); and (3) whether the BESS meets the siting factors in ORS 215.275 and MCC 17.136.040(I).

MCC 17.110.584

5. MCC 17.110.584 defines "utility facility" as any water, gas, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electricity, telephone and wire communication service, and CATV (cable television) service lines, mains, pumping stations, reservoirs, police underground transmission facilities, substations, and related physical facilities which do not include buildings regularly occupied by employees, parking areas, or vehicle, equipment and material storage areas, wireless communications facility or wireless communications facility attached.

MCC 17.110.584 defines a utility facility as physical infrastructure for an enumerated service, but does not expressly list Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Therefore, to meet the definition, a BESS must fit by analogy or context as a "related physical facility" for electric service.

6. The proposed facility is a standalone Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) consisting of battery containers and associated equipment designed to store electrical energy and later discharge that energy to the electrical grid or market.

Remington BESS is a battery storage asset owned and developed by RWE, an energy company. The BESS Project is to provide energy storage services to the PacifiCorp electrical grid.

Applicant is a private company that is not a public utility, and does not provide electric service to the public. The code definition of "utility facility" presumes facilities that are part of a utility service system, such as electric transmission or distribution infrastructure operated by or on behalf of a utility serving the public. In this case, Applicant's Project is not owned or operated by an electric utility. Applicant is not subject to public utility regulation for retail electric service. The proposed BESS does not provide direct electric service to customers. Applicant participates in energy storage and market operations for renewable energy. The proposed BESS lacks the public service character inherent in the utilities enumerated in MCC 17.110.584.

7. While MCC 17.110.584 includes “related physical facilities,” this language must be interpreted in context with the enumerated examples, all of which involve utility service delivery infrastructure. A privately owned BESS that could operate independently of transmission or distribution facilities, is not required to be located at a specific site to serve utility customers, and exists primarily for energy management or market participation, is not sufficiently related to the listed utility facilities to fall within the definition of “related physical facilities.”
8. A BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service as defined in MCC 17.110.584.

ORS 215.283(1)(c)

9. ORS 215.283(1)(c) provides that utility facilities necessary for public service, including wetland waste treatment systems but not including commercial facilities for the purpose of generating electrical power for public use by sale or transmission towers over 200 feet in height, may be established in the Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zone. A utility facility necessary for public service may be established as provided in ORS 215.275.
10. The proposed BESS project is a stand-alone battery energy storage system designed to store electrical energy and discharge the energy to the electric grid. The evidence indicates that the supply to the electric grid is as needed, or as selected by the operator.
11. Applicant argues that Oregon courts have interpreted “utility facility” broadly. However the Oregon cases involved facilities that actually performed the service at issue, including power generation, transmission lines, communications facilities, and broadcasting towers. See, e.g. *Save our Rural Oregon v. Energy Facility Citing Council*, 339 Or 353, 121 P3d 1141 (2005) and *McCaw Communications, Inc. v. Marion County*, 96 Or App, 773 P2d 779 (1989).

In *Cox v. Polk County*, 174 Or App 332, 25 P3d 970 (2001), the Court considered the term “utility facility” as used in ORS 215.283(1)(c) to mean equipment or apparatus, whether standing alone or as part of a structure, that functions to perform or provide, in whole or in part, a service such as the production, transmission, delivery or furnishing of electricity or natural gas, the purification of drinking water, or the treatment of solid or liquid waste. “The equipment comprising the facility need not be extensive or complex; in addition, the facility may include ancillary or off-site equipment such as transmission lines. *Id.* at 344. The Court specified that, at a minimum, the facility must include some equipment or apparatus that itself performs the relevant production, transmission or similar function or service.

12. Applicant’s characterizes the proposed BESS as supporting PacifiCorp’s system, and PacifiCorp’s need for additional storage resources. Applicant states that the specific Project objectives include providing enhanced grid reliability, resiliency, and stability. Applicant states that the BESS will “maximize” the existing system’s capability and

“improve” PacifiCorp’s ability to serve growing customer loads while reducing the risk of voltage collapse. (See Remington BESS, LLC Prehearing Brief, Page 7).

Applicant argues that the BESS project supports renewable integration, grid reliability, and commitment to clean energy targets. These benefits are supported by the evidence submitted by Applicant, and the potential benefits are acknowledged. However, benefit, even public benefit, is not the legal standard.

13. The proposed BESS does not transmit or distribute electricity. The proposed BESS does not deliver electric service to consumers. The proposed BESS functions as storage and is operated for system-support purposes. Interaction with the electric grid does not convert a storage facility into a utility service-delivery facility.
14. ORS 215.283(1)(c) requires a showing that the utility facility is required to provide the service, not merely beneficial, important, or supportive of public policy goals. PacifiCorp will continue to provide electric service regardless of whether the BESS is constructed. The proposed BESS does not qualify as a “utility facility” for purposes of 215.283(1)(c).

ORS 215.275 and MCC 17.136.040(I)

15. ORS 215.283(1)(c) states in relevant part that a utility facility necessary for public service may be established as provided in ORS 215.275. MCC 17.136.040(I) sets out the standards under which a facility is necessary if it must be situated in the EFU zone in order for the service to be provided.

The Hearings Officer finds that the proposed BESS does not qualify as a utility facility and is not necessary for public service under ORS 215.283(1)(c). However, even if the proposed BESS could be characterized as a “utility facility,” Applicant must also demonstrate that it is necessary for the BESS to be located on EFU land to provide the public service and meet the siting factors in ORS 215.275 and MCC 17.136.040(I).

MCC 17.136.040(I) requires the same showing of locational necessity and lack of reasonable alternatives as ORS 215.275. Local governments may apply this standard so long as they do not expand state criteria. *Brentmar v. Jackson County*, 58 Or LUBA 416, 426–27 (2009).

16. Applicant’s statements regarding the approval criteria for a utility facility necessary for public service are addressed below:

MCC 17.137.040(I.) Utility facilities necessary for public service, including wetland waste treatment systems, but not including commercial facilities for the purpose of generating electrical power for public use by sale or transmission towers over 200 feet in height. A facility is “necessary” if it must be situated in the EFU zone in order for the service to be provided. An applicant must demonstrate that reasonable alternatives have been considered and that the facility must be sited in an EFU zone due to one or more of the following factors as found in OAR 660-033-0130(16):

1. *Technical and engineering feasibility;*

Applicant did not provide any evidence to suggest that the proposed location is related to the technical or engineering feasibility of the proposal beyond being adjacent to a substation. Applicant emphasizes avoiding network upgrades, minimizing construction timelines, and meeting RFP deadlines.

These considerations reflect project efficiency and commercial feasibility, not technical infeasibility of non-EFU sites. The Applicant does not demonstrate that interconnection to the grid is technically impossible from non-EFU land, only that it may be more expensive or less desirable.

Applicant references options for varying design of the facility in other sections of this application that suggest the project has not been planned in detail. Without actual plans for construction of the BESS, there can be no conclusion about the technical and/or engineering feasibility of the proposal on any lands, let alone a proposed requirement to site the facility on high value farmland in the EFU zone.

As addressed below; Applicant addresses risk of fire but does not address in detail how that risk will be mitigated. The risk of fire itself carries a cascading list of associated environmental and health impacts. As a result of a lithium fire, there would be release of toxic chemicals into the air, soil and water, potential injury to first responders and citizens in the area such as respiratory issues, skin irritation, and long-term health issues. Beyond the safety issues are the environmental dangers posed by mass release of chemicals in the event of a failure of any of the batteries on site. Applicant does not address any of the technical details of these potential risks or how those risks could be mitigated. Applicant does not provide any evidence towards the feasibility of the proposed BESS to be engineered so as to mitigate the dangers inherent with BESSs.

The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, the proposal would not meet this criterion.

2. *The proposed facility is locationally dependent. A utility facility is locationally dependent if it must cross land in one or more areas zoned for exclusive farm use in order to achieve a reasonably direct route or to meet unique geographical needs that cannot be satisfied on other lands;*

A facility is locationally dependent only if it cannot reasonably operate unless it is located on EFU land.

Applicant argues that the BESS is locationally dependent because it must be located near a specific substation and within a particular transmission service area. Applicant suggests that other substations in the area would not meet the technical and engineering feasibility criterion because they would require upgrades to the networks, capacity, or new long transmission lines. Applicant states that other locations were

not suitable specifically due to requiring new overhead transmission line installation for compatibility.

Applicant did not provide any evidence to support the assertion that they examined other locations in the county for compatibility with the project. The location proposed poses dangers to surrounding farmland due to soil contamination, groundwater contamination, and chemical leakage. Applicant did not provide any information about potential emergency response at the proposed location. Applicant specifically proposes an intensive use on EFU land in a rural area instead of in an urban area adjacent to one of many substations within cities in Marion County where such a use would be potentially more appropriate from an environmental and emergency response standpoint.

Applicant suggests prolonging the life of the facility beyond the average 20-25 years for a BESS by frequent replacement of parts. Decommissioning requires collection of hazardous materials, and the Applicant does not explain how decommissioning of the facility could be performed.

Applicant's evidence demonstrates a preference for proximity, not a requirement that the facility occupy EFU land. Therefore, locational dependency under ORS 215.275 is not established.

The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, the proposal would not meet this criterion.

3. *Lack of available urban and nonresource lands;*

Applicant's alternative analysis narrows potential sites based upon a project-specific criteria, including parcel size, acquisition cost, network upgrade expense, and business objectives.

Applicant states that there are no other lands "in proximity to the Parrish Gap Substation". A BESS requires a substation, but not the Parrish Gap Substation specifically. The map of substations submitted by FOMC shows that there are many substations in Marion County on urban and nonresource lands. Applicant did not provide information to suggest that other potential siting locations on urban or nonresource lands were considered for the proposed BESS. Evidence on the record does not support the assertion that the proposed location is due to the lack of available urban and nonresource lands.

Applicant states that a core business objective of the Remington BESS Project is that the BESS be sited adjacent to a PacifiCorp substation to help address the utility needs of PacifiCorp. Applicant rejects FOMC's assertion that PGE substations or other substations are located outside of EFU zones and present alternative siting opportunities. Applicant contends that substations outside of PacifiCorp's system, or

outside the Parrish Gap Substation service area are not suitable due to operational and contractual considerations.

Applicant's position reflects a project preference and business strategy, not a showing of locational necessity as required under ORS 215.275 and MCC 17.136.040(I). The siting standard does not require the County to evaluate whether the proposed site is optimal or preferred for the Applicant's business model, but whether the facility must be located on EFU land in order for the public service to be provided.

The record demonstrates that a BESS requires a substation, but does not establish that it must be located adjacent to the Parrish Gap Substation specifically, nor that it must be located on EFU land to interconnect with the electric grid. Evidence submitted by FOMC includes mapping of multiple substations within Marion County, including substations located on urban and nonresource lands. Applicant did not provide evidence demonstrating that those substations were evaluated and rejected due to technical infeasibility, safety constraints, or regulatory barriers, as opposed to increased cost, longer timelines, or inconsistency with Applicant's preferred project configuration.

ORS 215.275 requires consideration of alternative locations, not alternatives that meet an applicant's preferred financial, contractual, or scheduling objectives. Evidence that alternative sites would require network upgrades, higher interconnection costs, or deviation from Applicant's business strategy does not establish that such sites are unavailable or infeasible for purposes of EFU siting.

Applicant's reliance on adjacency to a PacifiCorp substation demonstrates a preference for proximity, not a requirement that the facility be sited on EFU land. Applicant has therefore not demonstrated that the proposed location is necessary to provide the asserted public service, as required under ORS 215.275 and MCC 17.136.040(I).

ORS 215.275 requires consideration of alternative locations, not optimal or cost-effective alternatives. Evidence that non-EFU sites are more expensive or inconsistent with the Applicant's intended project and business plan does not establish that such sites are unavailable or unfeasible. Applicant's position is reasonable and justifiable, but it does not satisfy the requirements of ORS 215.275.

The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, the proposal would not meet this criterion.

4. *Availability of existing right-of-way;*

The proposal is for a facility that would not be appropriate to cite within a right-of-way. The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, this criterion would not apply.

5. *Public health and safety; and*

Applicant states it will comply with all local building and fire codes and that the facility does not produce any emissions or discharges. Applicant also states that appropriate signage will be placed on the high voltage substation equipment. Applicant states that BESS staff will be trained in fire prevention and fire department notification policies, and that staff will be required to follow those policies. Applicant does not describe the number of staff present, what hours they will be present, or what their non-emergency responsibilities will be. The staff for the BESS after initial construction are generally only on site for routine inspections and maintenance, not around the clock supervision of the system.

Applicant has not provided significant evidence to suggest that their proposal will not impact public health or create a significant safety hazard within the county.

Applicant argues that ORS 215.275 does not require any showing regarding potential public health or safety risk and argues that those considerations are not relevant to the ORS 215.275 inquiry. However, ORS 215.275 explicitly includes public health and safety as one of the several factors that may be considered in whether EFU siting is necessary. ORS 215.275(2)(e).

ORS 215.275(2)(e) treats “public health and safety” as one of several considerations, and it is not a separate approval criteria. No single factor is dispositive, and the ultimate question is locational necessity.

Public safety may be considered to the extent it is a siting factor under ORS 215.275.

MCC 17.136.040(I) requires the same showing of locational necessity and lack of reasonable alternatives as ORS 215.275. Local governments may apply this standard so long as they do not expand state criteria. *Brentmar v. Jackson County*, 58 Or LUBA 416, 426–27 (2009).

Applicant had access to the public record of concerns discussed at the public hearing regarding BESS. These concerns include significant inherent risks and potential impacts that result from establishment of a BESS on EFU land.

The potential for thermal runaway resulting in lithium fires and explosions of the batteries themselves is a serious risk, and the risk for environmental hazards is significant. Chemicals for fire suppression could runoff into the surrounding soils, groundwater, and streams across the subject parcel. At this location, due to the intermittent and perennial streams that flow through the proposed facility, this

chemical leakage could directly pollute water bodies. Those streams flow into canals utilized by Santiam Water Control District to provide water to farms in the area.

Contamination of the groundwater and the streams on the subject parcel may result in a loss of water supply required by farmers in the area to successfully grow crops, and the groundwater supply depended upon for drinking water. The risks to the residents, farming operations, and environment in the immediate area are significant.

Public health and safety considerations are evaluated solely as a factor under ORS 215.275 to determine whether the proposed facility must be sited on EFU land, and are not relied upon as an independent approval criterion or separate basis for denial. However, Applicant did not address the potential adverse impacts to agriculture and the environment resulting from the BESS project.

The necessity for mitigation of the risks imposed by these facilities is one reason the county is prohibiting BESS through Ordinance 1480 until specific standards can be developed. This reference is for context only and is not relied upon as a basis for the decision, which is grounded exclusively in the statutes and code provisions in effect at the time the application was submitted.

Applicant did not provide any significant evidence that the proposed BESS will not create significant hazards to public health and safety or that public health or safety considerations require siting the facility on EFU land as opposed to non-EFU land.

The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, the proposal would not meet this criterion.

If public health and safety is not considered a “criterion” but rather one of several factors for consideration under ORS 215.275, fire risk supports denial. EFU land is not inherently safer for lithium battery fires than industrial or urban lands because EFU areas have limited fire response infrastructure, longer response times, the presence of agricultural operations may complicate fire suppression.

Public safety considerations do not independently justify denial as a criteria, however, battery fire risk is a legitimate public health and safety consideration, and does not demonstrate that the proposed BESS must be sited on EFU land. EFU land does not provide a safety advantage over non-EFU locations.

6. Other requirements of state and federal agencies.

- a. Costs associated with any of the factors listed above may be considered, but cost alone may not be the only consideration in determining that a utility facility is necessary for public service. Land costs shall not be included when considering alternative locations for substantially similar utility facilities and the siting of utility facilities that are not substantially similar.*

Applicant states that cost was only one of the factors analyzed when selecting this location. The applicant did not provide analysis of any other factors. The evidence on the record suggests that cost is the sole deciding factor when selecting this location. This location has existing overhead transmission lines. Applicant states that they analyzed other locations near substations in the surrounding area, but all those stations would require upgrades such as installation of overhead transmission lines. The upgrades to a location are costs associated with that location. The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, the proposal would not meet this criterion.

- b. The owner of a utility facility approved under this section shall be responsible for restoring to its former condition as nearly as possible any agricultural land and associated improvements that are damaged or otherwise disturbed by the siting, maintenance, repair or reconstruction of the facility. Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the owner of the utility facility from requiring a bond or other security from a contractor or otherwise imposing upon a contractor the responsibility for restoration.*

Applicant states that it will comply with this section of code when the useful life of the facility is realized. Applicant did not provide any plan for decommissioning and restoration, and furthermore have not provided any evidence that it is possible to restore the project site to agricultural use after developing it with a BESS.

The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, the proposal would not meet this criterion.

- c. The applicant shall address the requirements of MCC 17.136.060(A)(1).*

MCC 17.136.060(A)(1) contains the criteria for the farm impacts test in the EFU zone. If the BESS is treated as a utility facility under ORS 215.283(1)(c), the farm impacts test does not apply, but the necessity and siting standards apply. Applicant argues that the farm impacts test does not apply because the Project qualifies under ORS 215.283(1)(c).

Because it is determined that the BESS is not a utility facility, the farm impacts test applies. The farm impacts test does not impose a new approval methodology, but

MCC 17.136.060(A)(1) governs non-farm uses in the AR/EFU context that are not utility facilities necessary for public service and expressly incorporates the standards of ORS 215.296. Where a proposed use does not qualify under ORS 215.283(1), MCC 17.136.060(A)(1) provides the only potential approval pathway, if any, and requires findings addressing impacts to accepted farm practices.

Local governments are required to apply ORS 215.296 where applicable and may not waive or ignore the farm-impacts test once a project falls outside ORS 215.283(1). *Friends of Yamhill County v. Yamhill County*, 255 Or App 636, 298 P3d 586 (2013).

Because the proposed BESS does not qualify under ORS 215.283(1)(c), the farm-impacts standards of ORS 215.296 and MCC 17.136.060(A)(1) must be considered.

The farm impacts test has been recently updated by the Department of Land Conservation and Development to accurately represent case law.

1. *The use will not force a significant change in, or significantly increase the cost of, accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm or forest use. Land devoted to farm or forest use does not include farm or forest use on lots or parcels upon which a non-farm or non-forest dwelling has been approved and established, in exception areas approved under ORS 197.732, or in an acknowledged urban growth boundary.*

For purposes of this section, a determination of forcing a significant change in accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm and forest use or a determination of whether the use will significantly increase the cost of accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm or forest use requires:

- A. *Identification and description of the surrounding lands, the farm and forest operations on those lands and the accepted farm practices on each farm operation and the accepted forest practices on each forest operation;*
- B. *An assessment of the individual impacts to each farm and forest practice, and whether the proposed use is likely to have an important influence or effect on any of those practices. This assessment applies practice by practice and farm by farm; and*
- C. *An assessment of whether all identified impacts of the proposed use when considered together could have a significant impact to any farm or forest operation in the surrounding area in a manner that is likely to have an important influence or effect on that operation.*
- D. *For purposes of this subsection, examples of potential impacts for consideration may include but are not limited to traffic, water availability and delivery, introduction of weeds or pests, damage to crops or livestock, litter, trespass, reduction in crop yields, or flooding.*
- E. *For purposes of this section, potential impacts to farm and forest practices or the cost of farm and forest practices, impacts relating to the construction or installation of the proposed use shall be deemed part of the use itself for the purpose of conducting a review under this section.*
- F. *In the consideration of potentially mitigating conditions of approval under ORS 215.296(2), the governing body may not impose such a condition upon the owner of the affected farm or forest land or on such land itself, nor compel said owner to accept payment to compensate for the*

significant changes or significant increases in costs described in this section.

Applicant disagrees that the farm impact test applies, but addressed the farm impacts test by stating that the project will not result in any discharges or emissions to the environment, and that they are committed to environmentally responsible development. Applicant acknowledges that if the county requires them to determine environmental monitoring and mitigation plans, then they would be willing to do so sometime in the future. The applicant provided no information about how the environmental monitoring could be conducted or what mitigation plans would entail. Applicant provided no detailed information about the environmental impacts of covering 15 acres with lithium batteries.

Applicant did not provide a detailed description of the surrounding lands or agricultural activities. Applicant did not provide any information about how the BESS might impact the surrounding agricultural activities. The limited evidence on the record, which is the result of Applicant's position that the farm impacts test does not apply, does not support the claim that the project will neither result in change in, or significantly increase the cost of, farm activities in the area.

Santiam Water Control District explicitly raised concerns that the Project will have an impact on surrounding lands, specifically an impact on water rights for farmers in the district. Applicant argues that it does not have water rights, and is not privy to the relationship between the landowner and water rights.

Applicant correctly stated at the hearing that it would be inappropriate to condition approval on a water rights analysis. However, because the farm impacts test applies, Applicant must address whether the Project will have an impact on surrounding lands.

Because the Project does not qualify as a utility facility necessary for public service under ORS 215.283(1)(c), it could be approved only, if at all, under MCC 17.136.060(A)(1). That section requires findings addressing impacts to accepted farm practices pursuant to ORS 215.296. Applicant did not seek approval under MCC 17.136.060(A)(1) and did not submit evidence sufficient to satisfy those criteria.

- d. In addition to the provisions above, the establishment or extension of a sewer system as defined by OAR 660-011-0060(1)(f) in an exclusive farm use zone shall be subject to the provisions of OAR 660-011-0060.*
- e. The provisions of this subsection do not apply to interstate natural gas pipelines and associated facilities authorized by and subject to regulation by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.*
- f. If the criteria contained in this subsection (1) for siting a utility facility on land zoned for exclusive farm use are met for a utility facility that is a*

transmission line, the utility provider shall, after the route is approved by the siting authorities and before construction of the transmission line begins, consult the record owner of high-value farmland in the planned route for the purpose of locating and constructing the transmission line in a manner that minimizes the impact on farming operations on high-value farmland. If the record owner does not respond within two weeks after the first documented effort to consult the record owner, the utility provider shall notify the record owner by certified mail of the opportunity to consult. If the record owner does not respond within two weeks after the certified mail is sent, the utility provider has satisfied the provider's obligation to consult. The requirement to consult under this section is in addition to and not in lieu of any other legally required consultation process. For the purposes of this subsection:

- i. "Consult" means to make an effort to contact for purpose of notifying the record owner of the opportunity to meet.*
- ii. "Transmission line" means a linear utility facility by which a utility provider transfers the utility product in bulk from a point of origin or generation, or between transfer stations, to the point at which the utility product is transferred to distribution lines for delivery to end users.*

No sewer system is proposed. The proposed facility is not a natural gas pipeline or transmission line. The proposed BESS is not a utility facility necessary for public service, but if it was, the above criteria d, e, & f would not apply.

17. Applicant applied for approval of an administrative review to construct a battery energy storage system as a utility facility necessary for public service. A BESS is not utility facility necessary for public service. If a BESS could be approved as a utility facility necessary for public service, this proposal would be unable to satisfy the applicable criteria.

VII. Order

It is hereby found that Applicant has not met its burden of proving the applicable standards and criteria for approval of an administrative review to construct a battery energy storage system as a utility facility necessary for public service on a 15-acre portion of a 133.77-acre parcel located in the 5200 block of Pearson Rd SE, Turner (T9S; R2W; Section 20D; Tax Lot 100 and T9S; R2W; Section 21C; Tax lots 100 & 200).

For the reasons stated herein, the Hearings Officer determines that the proposed use does not satisfy the applicable requirements of Marion County Code, including but not limited to MCC 136.040(I) and the standards for siting a utility facility necessary for public service, ORS 215.283(1)(c), ORS 215.275. The application is hereby DENIED.

VIII. Appeal Rights

An appeal of this decision may; be taken by anyone aggrieved or affected by this Order. An appeal must be filed with the Marion County Clerk (555 Court Str. NE, Suite 2130, Salem, Oregon by 5:00 p.m. on the 5th day of February, 2026. The appeal must be in writing, must be filed in duplicate, must be accompanied by a payment of \$500, and must state wherein this order fails to confirm to the provisions of the applicable ordinance. If the Board denies the appeal, \$300 of the appeal fee will be refunded.

DATED at Salem, Oregon this 21st day of January, 2026.



Jill F. Foster

Marion County Hearings Officer

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that I served the foregoing order on the following persons:

Linsey King
4015 Filbert Avenue
Keizer, OR 97303

Brent Stevenson
284 E Water Street
Stayton, OR 97383

Cristina Gispert
101 W. Broadway Street
Suite 1120
San Diego, CA 92101

Nema Jain
1999 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Alexander Thompson
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7230 3rd St SE
Turner, OR 97392

Area Advisory Committee: (via email)
Arkaye2@gmail.com (Aileen)

Roger Kaye
Friends of Marion County
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Salem, OR 97302

1000 Friends of Oregon
133 SW 2nd Ave
Portland, OR 97204-2597

Pudding River Watershed Council (via email)
anna@puddingriverwatershed.org
cleanpuddingriver@gmail.com

County Agencies Notified:

Assessor's Office (via email)
assessor@co.marion.or.us

Tax Collector (via email)
NMcVey@co.marion.or.us

Surveyor's Office (via email)
KInman@co.marion.or.us

Fire District: (via email)
denk@wvi.com

Planning Division (via email)
breich@co.marion.or.us
abarnes@co.marion.or.us
jspeckman@co.marion.or.us
ediaz@co.marion.or.us

Building Inspection (via email)
pwolterman@co.marion.or.us
Kaldrich@co.marion.or.us
CTate@co.marion.or.us

Public Works LDEP Section (via email)
jrasmussen@co.marion.or.us
mcldep@co.marion.or.us
JShanahan@co.marion.or.us

School District:
Cascade High School (via email)
charmon@cascade.k12.or.us

Code Enforcement (via email)
CGoffin@co.marion.or.us

State Agencies Notified:

Department of Environmental Quality
4026 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302
Oregon Department of State Lands
4026 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE Salem,
OR 97302.

DLCD hilary.foote@state.or.us

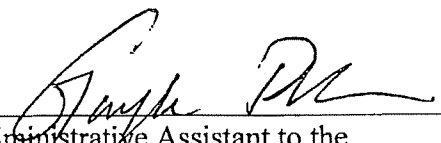
Special Agencies Notified:

Electricity - Pacific Corp (via email)
www.pacificcorp.com

Water District – Santiam
284 E. Water St.
Stayton, OR 97383

RWE Clean Energy
Attn: AL Thompson
1999 Harrison St. Suite 2720
Oakland, CA 94612

By mailing to them copies thereof. I further certify that said copies were placed in sealed envelopes addressed as noted above, that said copies were deposited in the United States Post Office at Salem, Oregon, on the 21st day of Month, 2026 and that the postage thereon was prepaid.



Administrative Assistant to the
Hearings Officer