



## Commissioners discussed planned solar project

ALBANY — Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker agreed Tuesday morning to sit on a “special advisory committee” concerning the possible development of a solar energy park on more than 1,500 acres of ground about eight miles south of Brownsville.

The “Muddy Creek Energy Park” project is being proposed by Hanwha Q Cells USA, a subsidiary of Hanwha Q Cells based in Seoul, South Korea. The company was founded in 1999 in Bitterfeld-Wolfen Germany, where its engineering division remains.

Board Chairman Nyquist said he is concerned this is an end-run around county land use processes.

Hanwha Q Cells, whose USA office is in Irvine, California, has opted to work with the Oregon state council.

According to information presented to the Board of Commissioners and the Planning & Building Department, the project would encompass installation of high-tech, sun-seeking solar panels that would be 12-foot tall at their peak.

Information about the Muddy Creek Energy Park was initially filed with the State of Delaware on June 23, 2022.

There would be enough units to produce 199 megawatts of power, including a 199-watt battery storage system.

199 megawatts would provide power to about 33,000 homes.

The company plans to deliver the electricity to PacifiCorp’s Diamond Hill substation via a half-mile long power line.

Major components of the system will include solar panels, sun tracker systems, posts and other related collector equipment.

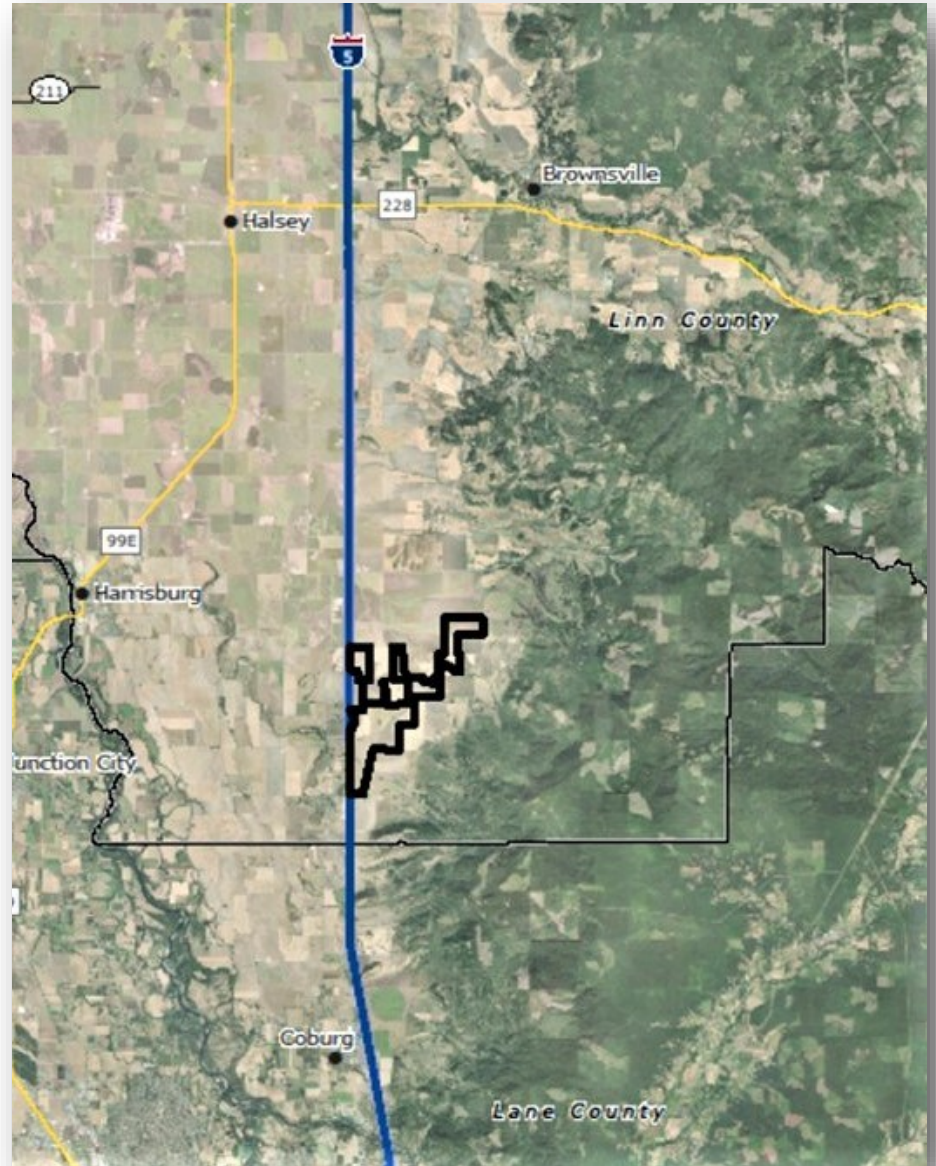
According to the company’s website, Hanwha Q Cells is the leader in market share for solar consumer panels in the United States at almost 34% and has held that position for four years. The company also has almost 18% of the commercial solar energy market.

Q Cells and Summit Ridge Energy, the nation’s largest commercial solar company, recently announced a partnership where Q Cells will provide

1.2 gigawatts of solar panels to support the development of more than 350 community solar projects during the next four years.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Linn-Benton Housing Authority for the Mental Health Houseless Project, not to exceed \$2.5 million in state pass-through money to build eight to 10 rental units for behavioral health supportive housing.
- Approved the purchase of 250 annual Microsoft/CDG-G computer licenses for \$610.73 each, totaling \$152,681 for the Public Health Department.
- Approved an agreement with the state to provide the Oregon-Alert Everbridge mass notification system free of charge for the Linn County Sheriff’s Office emergency management system.
- Learned from Planning & Building Director Steve Wills that the county issued 71 land use permits and 307 total permits in May. There were permits issued for six single-family dwellings and eight manufactured dwellings, plus 21 permits for additions and alterations. Code Enforcement closed 12 cases and opened 11.
- Approved a contract for \$150,753 with Helion Software for the Assessor/Tax Collector’s office.
- Approved putting two tax-foreclosed properties up for public auction at 10 a.m. August 9. The properties are 30594 Santiam Highway, Lebanon. Real market value of \$198,360 and minimum bid of \$67,746. The second property is at 1730 Cascade Drive, Lebanon. Real market value is \$200,250 and minimum bid is \$58,275.
- Had a lengthy discussion about a recent Supreme Court decision about how properties are foreclosed upon for back taxes and how any funds received in that process should



Site of proposed solar park about eight miles south of Brownsville.

- be distributed.
- Gave Law Librarian Amber Boedigheimer permission to apply for a \$45,000 grant from the Jackson Foundation. If approved, the money would support a Landlord-Tenant Warm Line, mediation services and lawyer services to assist people facing eviction.
- Approved transferring \$95,000 to purchase an emergency generator for the Lebanon LCSO substation and for an emergency radio system preparation.
- Approved closing First Avenue, SW Broadway, SW Linn Boulevard and Mill City

Drive in Mill City for that community’s annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.

- Agreed that Neighbor-to-Neighbor will handle the county’s community dispute resolution issues.
- Formalized increasing the Teamsters Union Cost of Living Adjustment from 2.5% agreed upon in contract negotiations to 4% due to extraordinary inflation costs.

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