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To: Members of the House Rules Committee

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: February 8, 2018

RE: House Bill 4076

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee: On behalf of the more than 25,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club in Oregon, I am pleased to provide this written testimony in support of House Bill 4076, the Small Donor Elections bill.

As an organization with a long history working to protect democracy and empower voters, we support HB 4076 and believe it is worthy of your support as well. This bill will ensure every voice matters in Oregon politics by making small donors a more powerful force in elections and reducing the need for candidates to rely on wealthy donors.

As it stands now, it is clear that our democracy is rigged in favor of wealthy donors. But if we want to make progress on the most pressing issues facing our state – including the environmental issues the Sierra Club works on most often – we must ensure our democracy is working for everyone, not just special interests. Small donor programs around the country have shown they break down the systemic barriers that shut out historically marginalized groups from participating in our democracy by increasing the number of small donors, especially among communities of color and low-income households. By creating a small donor election program in Oregon we can help make sure the people and communities that are historically disenfranchised are centered in our democracy.

For these reasons, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club supports House Bill 4076 and we urge its passage so that voters can rest assured our legislators are free of big money influence and able to focus on the solving the issues that concern their community most. We believe this bill's important aims will be beneficial to our state and to our environment. Thank you very much for considering our comments and please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance to the Committee.