



February 9th, 2018

To: Representative Helm, Chair, and Members of House Committee on Energy and Environment
From: Jaimes Valdez, Policy Manager, Spark Northwest
RE: Letter in support of HB 4148

Dear Chair Helm and members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment,

As a regional nonprofit organization focused on helping communities engage in locally-controlled clean energy, we are pleased to support House Bill 4148. Over the past 15 years, Spark Northwest (formerly named Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development) has helped residential customers and small agricultural producers in Oregon make the switch to solar energy, wind power, and energy efficient equipment. Through education and technical assistance, we provide tools for people of all income levels to lower their energy costs and invest in their communities.

Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) has been a key partner in many of our efforts, and plays a crucial role in the research, design and implementation of Oregon's renewable energy policies. Over the past decade we have partnered with ODOE in deploying technical assistance for rural communities through the US Department of Agriculture Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Working together, we provided technical assistance to farmers and rural communities around the state in accessing Federal grant funds to install renewable energy and energy efficiency equipment.

We have also worked with ODOE over the past year on an initiative funded by the US Department of Energy called Solar Plus. This is a multi-year, two-state effort to work with stakeholders in developing strategies and tools to deploy solar in ways that meet goals for grid support, resiliency, and social equity. ODOE's input and leadership on issues related to valuing the grid benefits of solar and related energy storage technologies was particularly beneficial, and their staff provided key guidance to the project.

The energy sector is experiencing a number of rapid and transformational changes, as customers and communities seek to use renewable energy and new technologies for controlling, storing, and managing energy. All of these changes are consistent with Oregon's policy direction and climate goals, and we need a capable Oregon Department of Energy focused on the future of our energy systems and our communities.

HB 4148 creates an advisory board to help move the Department forward and directs them to develop strategic plans. We feel this newly formed Oregon Energy Board could help the guide the path forward to a clean and equitable energy future. Spark Northwest asks that the House Committee on Energy and Environment support HB 4148.

Sincerely,
Jaimes Valdez
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