



February 12, 2018

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 1519 and -1 amendment and SB 1537

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee,

Climate Solutions and many others look to the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) to provide technical expertise, data, and thought leadership on energy policy. The passage of Senate Bill 1547 in 2016 and other recent legislation has chartered a new course for Oregon's energy future and ODOE has an important role to play in its successful implementation. Looking forward, Oregon will need to take additional steps to achieve its legislated greenhouse gas reduction goals and changing energy environment, and it should be able to rely on its state energy department to inform those efforts. In addition, ODOE plays an important role in ensuring energy safety, including oversight of legacy nuclear energy issues, and in the siting of new energy facilities.

Climate Solutions believes that Oregon is stronger and better positioned to lead on climate and the transition to a clean energy economy if our state energy department is well-functioning and resourced. We applaud the efforts of the Legislature and the Governor to develop more transparency, oversight and accountability within ODOE. Progress is being made with ongoing reforms within ODOE while also rebuilding ODOE's strong policy expertise.

Climate Solutions is concerned with SB 1519 and the -1 amendment, and SB 1537, which represent a wholesale shifting of ODOE's rulemaking and policymaking authority to a new commission. With the successful changes in staffing and roles at ODOE (including elimination of tax credit programs within the agency), ODOE already has moved a long way from where it was. An advisory group with oversight functions like is created in the current HB 4148 is much preferable and would further this transition and provide added transparency and oversight functions while not completely altering how the agency carries out its vital mission.

In addition, Climate Solutions supports that any appointments to an advisory group or oversight commission represent a diverse range of energy backgrounds with a commitment to equity and inclusion. We are very concerned about the outsized utility participation in the proposed

commission in SB 1519 and SB 1537, with ex officio appointees who may be employed by or contracted to regulated utilities who have pecuniary interests in the decisions made by the commission and agency.

Finally, Climate Solutions strongly prefers that HB 4148 does not attempt to change state energy policy or the ODOE mission as is done in the Senate versions. For example, SB 1519-1 removes reference to concern over expanding non-renewable forms of energy to the system and discouraging inefficient modes of transportation. After the Legislature has passed visionary legislation requiring 50% renewable energy and the phase-out of coal in recent years, it would be a step backward to remove that policy statement.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Meredith Connolly".

Meredith Connolly
Oregon State Director
Climate Solutions

About our organization:

Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis. For 20 years, Climate Solutions has been working to implement energy efficiency, renewable energy, and carbon reduction policies that demonstrate that clean energy and broadly shared economic prosperity go hand-in-hand.