



Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon Legislature

RE: Environment Oregon opposes Senate Bill 508

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water and open space. We oppose Senate Bill 508 because we believe Oregon should not undermine its own effective and widely-supported Renewable Portfolio Standard by including hydropower sources that have previously been excluded, reducing investment in renewable energy and ensuring that Oregon's energy mix will remain dirty.

Initially passed in 2007, Oregon's Renewable Portfolio Standard sets a requirement for how much of the electricity we use must come from renewable resources.¹ In 2016, this commitment was increased to 50% as part of the Coal to Clean bill, ensuring that the state's already-considerable hydropower resources and increased renewable energy generation in the years to come would combine to provide Oregon with an energy mix that was more than 80% renewable by 2040.^{1,2} This increase attracted broad support, as the utilities called the bill "affordable and workable" while community groups and advocates praised its commitment to reducing air pollution and carbon emissions from dirty coal plants³. Pacific Power found that the RPS would lower emissions by 35 million tons by 2040, and this bold commitment to renewable energy garnered praise across the country and world.³

¹ "Renewable Portfolio Standard." *Www.oregon.gov/Energy*, Oregon Department of Energy, 2019, www.oregon.gov/energy/energy-oregon/pages/renewable-portfolio-standard.aspx.

² Milman, Oliver. "Oregon Becomes First State to Pass Law to Completely Eliminate Coal-Fired Power." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 3 Mar. 2016, www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/03/oregon-coal-climate-law-kate-brown.

³ "Pacific Power Analysis of Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan Shows HB 4036 Is Affordable and Workable." *Www.pacificpower.net*, Pacific Power, 27 Jan. 2016, www.pacificpower.net/about/nr/nr2016/clean-electricity-coal-transition.html.

Currently, hydropower electricity from certified low-impact dams, newer facilities, and efficiency upgrades to existing hydroelectric facilities counts towards the RPS. These sources comprise a relatively small percentage of the roughly 40% share that hydropower accounts for in the statewide energy mix.⁴ If all hydropower is treated as renewable, then renewable energy already makes up close to 50% of the state's energy mix.⁴ By including all hydropower in the state's RPS, Senate Bill 508 renders the standard toothless; if Oregon hasn't already reached the standard, it will in the next few years, leaving utilities no incentive to invest in the clean energy technologies of the future.

The passage of the 2016 Coal to Clean bill and Oregon's strong renewable portfolio standard have helped establish Oregon as a nationwide leader on climate change and clean, renewable energy. As the Legislature continues its work to address this important issue, it makes no sense to move backward on our RPS while moving forward elsewhere. Oregon's utilities are already making real investments in renewable energy, as exemplified by Portland General Electric's plans to build a first-of-its-kind large-scale renewable facility in Eastern Oregon, and Oregonians expect the Legislature to honor its existing commitment to promoting renewable energy and fighting climate change.⁵ Environment Oregon respectfully opposes Senate Bill 508 because including large-scale hydropower in Oregon's RPS undercuts the state's commitment to renewable energy, threatens to eliminate the effectiveness of the standard, and jeopardizes our climate goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

Sincerely,
John Ammondson
Fellow, Environment Oregon

⁴ "Electricity Mix in Oregon." *Www.oregon.gov/Energy*, Oregon Department of Energy, 2019, www.oregon.gov/energy/energy-oregon/pages/electricity-mix-in-oregon.aspx.

⁵ Flatt, Courtney. "A Solar-Wind-Battery Project Could Make Eastern Oregon Home To 1st-Of-Its-Kind Renewable Energy Site." *Opb.org*, Oregon Public Broadcasting, 16 Feb. 2019, www.opb.org/news/article/eastern-oregon-solar-wind-battery-renewable-portland-general-electric/.