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To: Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: March 12, 2013

RE: House Bill 2939 – The “Right To Know Your Energy Use and Save Money” Act

Chair Bailey and Members of the Committee: Good afternoon, my name is Rhett Lawrence and I’m the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. I’m here testifying on behalf of more than 20,000 members and supporters in Oregon, but we also work closely with the many chapters of the national Sierra Club. Thank you for allowing my brief comments today.

The Oregon Chapter is proud to support House Bill 2939 – a common-sense bill that will give Oregonians the ability to evaluate their household energy use and will provide them with personalized and understandable insights that will help them save money. As you will hear in greater detail, HB 2939 would establish a statewide comparative energy usage disclosure program that will be implemented by the Energy Trust of Oregon in partnership with the investor-owned utilities. It is important to note that the requirements of this bill will primarily be facilitated by the Energy Trust and that it will not place substantial additional burdens or costs on the utilities.

The program set up by HB 2939 will provide individualized paper or electronic reports to households that would compare their energy consumption to that of similar households in their area. In addition, the reports will provide tips customized to the specific households to help consumers make smarter decisions about their energy use and save on their bills. Since it has been shown that providing consumers with comparisons that let them know how they stack up against their neighbors is an effective tool for motivating a decrease in energy use, this program will result in both energy and bill savings for households across the state. In addition, it is estimated that we could see an increase in participation in other energy efficiency programs of 20-60% as a result of providing this information to consumers. Households would also be given the opportunity to opt out of the program if they have privacy or other concerns.

You will much more detail from other presenters today, but the Sierra Club is convinced that this bill would help deliver real savings to Oregonians regardless of income, location, or home size. The Energy Trust’s pilot program in Clackamas, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Washington, and Yamhill counties has already shown that these initiatives work. And with a projected average savings of \$35 annually for

about a million Oregon households and more than \$30 million saved statewide every year, this program will pay for itself within three years.

In addition to money savings, the energy saved is projected to be more than 60,000 tons of CO2 annually – the equivalent of taking nearly 20,000 homes off the electrical grid. Such energy savings would also be a major step toward having the state achieve the Governor's plan of using energy efficiency and conservation to address all future electrical load growth in the state. Indeed, we may not be able to accomplish that statewide goal without initiatives such as this one.

In conclusion, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club believes HB 2939 is an important bill for both environmental and fiscal reasons. We believe that Oregonians have a right to know how much energy they are using on a comparative basis and how they can better manage their energy usage to save money. And if by doing so, they can also do their little part to help to save the planet, then so much the better! We urge Committee members to support this bill moving forward, including the amendments being offered by Rep. Bailey today. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony.