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To: Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: June 8, 2015

RE: House Bill 3415

Co-Chairs Devlin and Rayfield and Members of the Committee: On behalf of the more than 20,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club in Oregon, I appreciate the opportunity to present this written testimony on House Bill 3415. Unfortunately, though we supported the original bill, we are obligated now to voice our opposition to HB 3415 as amended.

As an organization with a long history working to move beyond fossil fuels in Oregon, we had great interest in the original HB 3415, which would have instituted a 10-year moratorium on hydraulic fracturing – or “fracking” – for oil and gas in our state. Given the indisputable impacts of fracking in other states on surface water, ground water, and public health, among other things, we would be very concerned if oil and gas fracking were to occur in Oregon.

However, the bill was amended in committee to remove the moratorium, and to instead require a report from DOGAMI and DEQ on the need for rulemaking or legislation to address the potential impacts of fracking. In addition, the bill would institute a set of “best practices” that any operation seeking to frack in Oregon would have to demonstrate would be complied with.

While we appreciate the bill sponsor’s attempts to make fracking regulation as restrictive as possible, we believe this legislation could create the perception that there is some sort of “safe” or “best” way to frack. And *we fundamentally disagree that there is any such thing as a safe or best way to frack*; the impacts are too great and the hazards are too real. Any legislation that could provide a roadmap for how fracking could someday occur in Oregon is misguided and is unquestionably a step in the wrong direction.

The Sierra Club still believes that a moratorium on fracking would be entirely appropriate and we thank the sponsor of this bill for that idea in the original bill. But as it stands now, House Bill 3415 takes us down a dangerous road and thus we must oppose it and urge this Committee to do the same. Thank you very much for considering my comments and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance to the Committee.