

**Testimony to the Oregon House Committee on Energy and Environment Megan Schrader,
Executive Director, TechNet Northwest Region
Thursday, February 4, 2016**

Chair Vega Pederson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

TechNet represents over 70 of the nation's leading companies in the fields of information technology, internet media, venture capital and green technology. We strongly support advancing clean energy, energy efficiency, and clean transportation technologies. TechNet applauds the leadership of this Committee and groups involved in crafting legislation to advance these goals. However, though we support the concepts in HB 4036, TechNet believes that two amendments are needed to strengthen customer choice and protect private sector innovation.

First, TechNet members have strong commitments to using renewable energy for their operations. One of the challenges of growing technology facilities in Oregon has been the ability to procure renewable energy as cost-effectively as has been done in many neighboring states. There is an amendment currently in the process of being drafted that will promote renewables sooner than the current bill draft by allowing for direct access to procure renewables in the near term, long before the bill's contemplated increases in 2025. Direct access would be a tremendous economic development tool to attract new customers to Oregon, who need renewable energy as a fundamental requirement of their business operations. Although some form of direct access exists currently, transition charges applied to a customer wanting to use it makes it cost prohibitive to undertake. This amendment will address this issue, incentivize new investments and expand consumer choice.

Second, as it relates to utilities and electric vehicle charging stations, TechNet has concerns that the proposal as currently drafted doesn't give adequate power to the Oregon Public Utilities Commission to ensure competition and consumer choice.

Drivers should be able to charge their electric vehicles at workplaces, grocery stores, malls, parks and many other locations across the state. Not only will this help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it will drive innovation and create jobs.

But how this goal is achieved is critically important.

As a state, we have a choice to make: will we rely upon an antiquated command and control regulatory model, giving utilities monopoly power to achieve this goal? Or will we create a network of stations that compete on price, location and service?

The latter approach allows for innovation and expanded choice for consumers.

Taken together, we believe that the current proposal threatens the development of EV charging technology and ultimately our ability to meet these important goals.

So we recommend another modest amendment to include that the development of Oregon's EV charging program should take place under the auspices of a PUC proceeding. This will help ensure that the program goes forward with the proper level of oversight and transparency.

Second, we strongly support provisions that would increase consumer choice, to ensure that consumers can decide for themselves which products and services to use.

Without amendments, the bill lacks provision for oversight, innovation, and consumer choice. As a result, not only will it cost consumers more, it will place a stranglehold on a growing and competitive market.

Oregonians deserve to have a choice in energy and technology. These small changes to HB 4036 will ensure that private companies can access the fuels and products they chose, while preserving innovation and competition and reaching these important RPS goals.

Thank you.