

February 17, 2016

Chairman Lee Beyer and Members
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, Oregon

Re: HB 4036 (Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan) – SUPPORT

Mr. Chairman and Members:

On behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists and our 11,000 supporters in Oregon, we are writing to ask for your support of HB 4036, the Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan. HB 4036 is a comprehensive proposal that would double the state's commitment to renewable energy, lock in cost-effective efficiency investments, and completely phase out the use of coal as an electricity source. The bill would also increase access to community-based solar development, including for low-income Oregonians, and reduce barriers to greater investments in electric vehicle infrastructure.

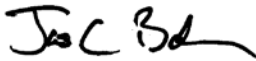
Currently, about one-third of the power delivered to homes and businesses in Oregon comes from coal-fired power plants, the vast majority of which are located out-of-state. HB 4036 would require Pacific Power to stop importing electricity from their out-of-state coal-fired generating facilities by 2030. PGE would have an additional five years (if needed) to retire or stop receiving power from the coal generating units it currently owns at the Colstrip plant in Montana. Combined, these moves are projected to nearly cut in half the carbon emissions of the state's two largest electric utilities. While this proposal won't guarantee coal plant retirements on its own, it does make their retirement more likely. The loss of access to Oregon's power market, along with increasing competition from cleaner alternatives and other state and federal policies to curb carbon pollution, will ratchet up the pressure to close additional coal generators throughout the region. Indeed, Oregon's successful leadership on this front could spur other states to take similar actions and greatly accelerate the nation's transition to a low-carbon power system.

The Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan will also double Oregon's existing renewable portfolio standard (RPS) from 25 percent by 2025 to 50 percent by 2040 (for PGE and Pacific Power only). An RPS is a market-friendly policy that requires electricity providers to gradually increase the amount of wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources in their power supplies. Oregon adopted its current RPS in 2007, and utilities in the state are on track to meet the standard at virtually no additional cost to consumers. A 50 percent RPS in Oregon is an achievable target that would place the state among a select group of national renewable energy leaders that have recently adopted similar (or even stronger targets), including California, New York, Hawaii, and Vermont.

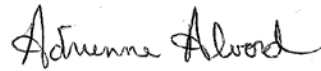
This legislation will also help advance adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in Oregon. Our recent analysis (<http://ucsusa.org/westcoastfuels>) shows that adoption of EVs is a key strategy to reducing oil use and global warming pollution from Oregon's transportation sector. By directing electric utilities to invest in vehicle electrification infrastructure, this bill will help remove barriers to consumer adoption of EVs.

Oregon has a long history of leading by example on environmental issues. With the Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan, the state is once again rising to the challenge with an innovative and achievable policy proposal that, if adopted, will drive down harmful carbon emissions, keep communities healthy, and spur economic growth. For these reasons, we urge your support for HB 4036.

Sincerely,



Jason Barbose
Western States Policy Manager



Adrienne Alvord
Western States Director