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Senate Committee on Business and Technology
Testimony in Support of HB 4036
Monday, February 22, 2016

My name is Les Perkins. I'm the Manager of Farmers Irrigation District located in Hood River County. I've also served as a Hood River County Commissioner for the past 15 years focusing on energy, water, and natural resource issues and concerns. I'm here today to provide testimony in support of HB 4036 with amendments.

Farmers Irrigation District provides irrigation water to nearly 6,000 acres of highly productive farm land in the Hood River Valley. Like much of Oregon, agriculture is the backbone of the economy in Hood River. The reliable delivery of irrigation water is crucial to the success of farmers in Hood River County.

What many don't know is that small scale, community renewable energy projects are a big part of what has helped to keep farmers in Hood River competitive globally. FID generates 26 million kwh annually of certified low impact hydro power. Over the 30 years of operation, FID's hydro facilities have provided revenue that has allowed investment of over \$45 million into infrastructure. 100% of the revenue generated by FID's projects has stayed in the community in the form of infrastructure investment, construction jobs, and salaries.

The result of the continual re-investment of power generation revenue is an irrigation system that is one of the most efficient in the state of Oregon. FID uses half the water that it did 30 years ago to deliver water to the same number of acres, and is able to do it more reliably, particularly in a drought year. Furthermore, FID now delivers pressurized and filtered water to its farmers which facilitates the use of state of the art application methods such as micro emitters, improving crop quality, reducing inputs, and minimizing water and energy use.

The model that FID has used to modernize its irrigation system is not an anomaly. Irrigation and water districts around the state have used this same model, including one other in Hood River County. In order for these projects to be built and for communities to realize the benefits associated with these projects, the regulatory environment must make them a priority. Making 8% community based generation a mandate instead of a goal in the current RPS is a step in the right direction and could help lead to more projects like the ones at FID. It could also help to keep projects like FID's solvent into the future.

The devil is always in the details. Details such as compliance deadline and the definition of eligible projects will determine the ultimate success of this effort. FID, CREA, OWRC, AOC, the Renewable Energy Coalition, and many others will continue to work with members of the Oregon House and Senate to ensure that the opportunity to invest in projects that strengthen our local and state economies, both in the near and long term, is not lost.

HB 4036 with the proposed amendments is a step in the right direction. It is by no means the ultimate solution but instead is a step down the right road that can ultimately lead our communities and our state to a more prosperous energy future.

Thank you,

Les Perkins

Manager, Farmers Irrigation District