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Chair Dembrow, members of the committee....My name is Steven Cossin and I live in Ashland, OR. I am here today to share my support for SB 557 and explain how it can have a significant impact on me and many others like me.

I began working for True South Solar 3 months ago, they are a residential and commercial solar installation company based in Ashland. As a young person, entering the workforce, it has not been easy finding full-time sustainable work in southern Oregon. There are few job opportunities in southern Oregon that pay a family wage. Many of the jobs in our tourist-based economy are vulnerable now because of increasingly hotter and smokier summers. I was having a hard time finding work and was considering moving out of state for a full-time family wage job.

Over the last 5 years the cost for solar PV has dropped by 64%, making it possible for many home owners to install solar systems on their homes. As a result, the job I now have became a possibility and our business is booming. For the first time, I now have a good paying, family-wage job, and I do not have to work two or more jobs at once. I am working to better my community and contribute to a growing industry that I am proud to be a part of.

With the implementation of SB 557 Oregon can expand the renewable energy workforce and create new high-paying technical jobs for Oregonians, like me. Proceeds from this program should be reinvested into communities that need it most, including rural communities like Jackson and Josephine county, to help transition to clean energy and prepare for a changing climate. My community wants to see smart, practical action to slow climate change, and transition to clean energy. This year, Oregon has the chance to take action on climate pollution while also boosting our local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I hope that you support SB557.