



**Testimony to the House Energy and Environment
Committee on HB 2710-2
March 20, 2017**

**Jana Gastellum, Legislative Director
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council strongly supports HB 2710-2. This bill will build on Oregon's history of energy efficiency leadership. It will ensure that Oregon stays at the forefront of building and transportation solutions and that building owners and tenants save on energy costs.

Oregon's built environment is a major consumer of energy, including electricity and natural gas. To cut climate pollution, our buildings must become more efficient. Buildings are responsible for about 30% of Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions. However, technology exists today that can dramatically cut energy waste and improve building comfort and performance. Here in Oregon, there are already numerous ultra-efficient and "zero net energy" homes and buildings that effectively cut a building's energy use to zero or near-zero over a year.

These extremely efficient buildings can be individual homes or large commercial buildings. The IronHorse Lodge in Prineville is a facility that features affordable housing for lower-income seniors.¹ A combination of efficiency and on-site solar lowers utility costs for individuals on fixed incomes, while also reducing climate pollution.

The buildings we build today will stay with us for decades or even centuries. It is much more cost-effective to build them as efficiently as possible now rather than retrofitting them later. People who move into a highly efficient building see benefits from day one—lower energy bills and greater comfort (better efficiency also creates buffers for noise). According to the Zero Energy Project, ZNE homeowners can save over \$2000 in the first year alone.²

This bill is also important for the numerous cities that have adopted climate action plans. Oregon law prohibits local jurisdictions from developing separate building codes. Thus, cities are dependent on a statewide code that will deliver necessary energy savings. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the state to take leadership action to assure localities can meet their local commitments.

Just as building technology is evolving, so too is transportation technology. Increasing numbers and models of plug-in and all-electric vehicles are being offered every year.

¹ <http://www.ironhorseprineville.com/ironhorse-community/ironhorse-lodge/>

² This factors in mortgage costs as well as utility bills. Available at: <http://zeroenergyproject.org/>

New homes and buildings should be “EV-ready” to reduce barriers for transportation electrification. Just as new homes today would not be built without wall outlets, they should not be built without the ability to plug in vehicles.

Oregon has a talented and skilled workforce, including contractors, homebuilders, and architects, that can work together to meet the 2032 goals in this bill. The bill creates flexibility for how the long-term goals are achieved. It can take advantage of Oregon’s existing processes while leaving ample room for designer and builder ingenuity.

Oregonians deserve efficient, resilient buildings. Efficiency has often been a bipartisan, multi-stakeholder effort. Cutting waste is a shared value. We look forward to working together to achieve lower energy bills, reduced climate pollution and advancing healthy and affordable housing.

I urge your support of HB 2710-2.