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**Testimony to the House Energy and Environment
Committee on HB 2020
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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 2020.

We would first like to commend the interim working group for taking a deep look at the Oregon Department of Energy and working to develop recommendations for how to move the agency forward and better prepare Oregon for a 21st Century energy system. Similarly, we appreciate the willingness of agency leadership and staff to work collaboratively and productively and provide the working group with needed information.

Oregon needs a strong state energy department that has an expanded mission to include climate change. Energy and climate are inextricably linked. It is critical that the state have a well-resourced agency that can undertake analysis, coordinate actions, and propose solutions for ensuring the state meet its climate goals. We support the change in both name and mission.

Adding an explicit reference to climate change in the agencies mission is essential. We support this addition in particular:

(b) That the development of energy resources be accomplished consistent with state greenhouse gas reduction goals.

We also support a clearer governance structure, including the addition of a Climate and Energy Board. We would strongly encourage that additional climate expertise be added to the Board. Climate change and the variety of energy-related solutions are vast and a range of expertise would be beneficial for guiding the agency as it takes on its new role.

We also support the formation of an official Interagency Climate Coordinating Committee. This Interagency Committee must have adequate staff resources and clear direction for each involved agency. If it takes on the role of the current Global Warming Commission, it should continue to assess Oregon's progress to achieving 2050 climate goals. The Global Warming Commission has produced very valuable reports and has been a source of climate leadership in the state. These actions need to be continued and expanded for the health, safety and prosperity of Oregon.

We appreciate that the Oregon Department of Energy and Climate could be a resource for legislators to get information. The agency could also track programs in a more holistic and consistent manner. For example, information on statewide energy efficiency efforts is lacking.

In whatever assessments the State Department of Energy and Climate carries out, we believe it is critical the agency always factor in the costs of climate inaction, the benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and that analysis be anchored to the deep emissions reduction needed to secure science-based 2050 targets (and beyond).

To better achieve Oregon's energy and climate goals, we urge a yes vote on HB 2020.