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Testimony for Hearing on April 10, 2017 – Support for HB 3343, Climate Test Bill

Chair Helm and members of the House Energy and Environment Committee,

We strongly support HB 3343 with -1 amendment. While we are relatively new to Oregon, we have watched with excitement various actions Oregon has taken out of a commitment to address the critical issues around climate change. We moved here from oil and gas country in Utah where the economics of boom and bust fossil fuel exploitation fairly well silence such discussions. We commend decision-makers including elected officials for setting greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. Now that it is clear that those goals are not able to be met with primarily voluntary efforts, you are considering action to try different tacks. This is entirely appropriate.

One critical action as Oregon revisits what needs to be done is to ensure that we have adequate information about new, proposed projects to enable us to avoid in fact-based fashion those that will drag us backwards--proposals that will thwart us in reaching our emissions goals. For example, we have watched quite carefully since moving here in 2013 the Jordan Cove Pacific Connector Pipeline Project. At that time, FERC staff were working with project proponents on the Environmental Impact Study (EIS). Neither the draft nor the final EIS considered the proposed project's climate impacts in any meaningful way. We cannot realistically expect such information to be made available voluntarily by a project proponent. There appears to have been a vacuum in statutory mechanisms for Oregon to compel it either so as to be able to take impacts on its own goals into account, either. HB 3343 will help address that.

HB 3343 creates a “climate test” designed to help us make informed decisions about large scale infrastructure projects that knock on our door. The bill's provisions are intended to ensure that we are able to assess full economic impacts and weigh benefits against downside economic consequences of climate impacts.

The science is clear. We must take the impacts of climate change very seriously. By providing a “test” that includes climate impacts, we can take a clear-eyed look at other factors in light of those impacts in all of their breadth. hotter, drier summers; increased wildfires; increased irrigation needs; and disease and pest increases and other drought impacts, to name a few. We are part of the world community, as well. We believe Oregon needs to do everything it can.

It makes no sense for Oregon to ignore global efforts to address climate change in our ongoing economic development strategies. The wave of the future is not—and must not be—fossil fuels. HB3343 allows us to align our economic development strategies with trends evidenced by the Paris Agreement. We fervently hope that Oregon will take bold steps to a renewable energy future. While enabling us to avoid projects that will take us in the wrong direction, it will allow us to encourage and facilitate with confidence projects that will take us down the right road.

We urge you to continue progress towards a firm clean energy stance this legislative session. One important step is to pass HB 3343.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views,

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