

April 15, 2016 – Committee on Energy and Environment – HB-2135

Chair Helm and members of the committee. My name is Michael Mitton and I am a concerned citizen of Oregon. For the past 25 years I have been studying the science of climate change and its likely impacts on our society. I am deeply concerned about the threats posed by climate disruption. So are the global science community and many others such as the Defense Dept. which gives it the ominous distinction of being a threat multiplier. Nevertheless, I am equally convinced that we can muster the political will to tackle this problem and unleash the biggest economic opportunity the world has seen. Some countries and states have already started to do just that. We need to ensure Oregon is not left behind.

Last year, wind and solar comprised 70% of all the new electric generating capacity added in the United States. Clean energy is clearly the energy of the future. It's already cheaper and it will reduce pollution and help restore our natural climate. Converting our society to run on clean energy is an economic opportunity that will benefit rural areas as much as urban. HB-2135 will help Oregon achieve these benefits particularly if GHG reduction goals are based on the best available science and the use of offsets are reduced as much as possible.

New wind power plants and new solar power plants can now produce electricity cheaper than new coal or natural gas power plants — even without any governmental support. Utility scale unsubsidized costs for wind start at 3.2 cents per kWh and 4.6 cents for solar. This compares to 4.8 cents for natural gas and 6.0 cents for coal. It's worth noting that all plants require fuel to produce electric power but that fuel is free for clean energy and always will be.

Furthermore wind and solar do not have the significant health and environmental burdens which fossil fuels imposed on our society. Harvard Medical School estimates coal alone costs the US an extra \$500 billion per year in healthcare.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are more labor-intensive than fossil fuels. The rapid growth in clean energy will provide more jobs and better jobs and they will be more evenly distributed throughout the economy. US wind power jobs were up 20% in 2016, many of those were in rural areas. This is the industry of the future and Oregon needs to participate in it.

Thank you.