

# Northwest & Intermountain Power Producers Coalition

## STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SB 978 (A-Eng.)

SB 978 (A-Eng.) unanimously passed out of the Senate Business & Transportation Committee on April 17, 2017. The committee chair, Senator Lee Beyer who formerly served as chair of the Oregon Public Utility Commission, actively supports enactment.

SB 978 (A-Eng.) directs the Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) to investigate and report to the Legislature on how changes in the electric power industry impact its regulation of investor-owned utilities.

The electric power industry is changing rapidly. New technology, increased competition and falling prices challenge the traditional role of utilities. The growing installation of solar (photovoltaic) collectors by homeowners and businesses challenge conventional utility service. Meanwhile, more and more industrial and commercial utility customers want to leave conventional utility service and buy at directly from the market.

These and many other changes to the status quo require a reexamination of how the OPUC regulates Oregon's three investor-owned utilities: PacifiCorp, Portland General Electric and Idaho Power.

Passage of SB 978 (A-Eng.) mandates a public process where the OPUC will allocate the necessary time and resources to investigate a list of "industry trends, technologies and policy drivers" impacting utility operations and the regulatory practices used by the Commission.

SB 978 (A-Eng.) was sponsored by the Northwest & Intermountain Power Producers Coalition (NIPPC), which introduced a companion bill, SB 979, to make it easier for new or expanding Oregon businesses to secure 100% renewable energy to meet their power requirements.

**SB 978 (A-Eng.) has no General Fund impact.**

For further information, contact NIPPC lobbyist Jim Gardner (cell 503 740 7002 or email [jgardner@gardnerandgardner.com](mailto:jgardner@gardnerandgardner.com)).