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Eurus Energy America
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TO: Senator Betsy Johnson and Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Ways and Means SubCommittee on Transportation and Economic Development on Business and Transportation Members, Joint Committee on Ways and Means SubCommittee on Transportation and Economic Development on Business and Transportation

FR: Rikki Seguin, Policy Director, Renewable Northwest

RE: Comments on SB 978A

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg:

Renewable Northwest, a diverse member organization that is dedicated to the responsible development of renewable energy resources in Oregon and throughout the Pacific Northwest, is pleased to support SB 978A. SB 978A requires the Oregon Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) to establish a public process in order to investigate how industry trends, technologies, and policy drivers may impact the existing regulatory system and incentives currently employed by the Commission.

The electricity sector is undergoing rapid and dramatic changes, including changes in the available technologies and suppliers, customer preferences for being supplied with different resources or combinations of resources, and the ability of different resources to interact together on the grid. Customers in Oregon and elsewhere are increasingly looking to support investments in clean, renewable energy and complementary technologies, like energy storage. While customers may be quick to embrace new technologies and product offerings, the regulatory paradigm that governs the utilities’ relationship with these technologies and suppliers is not as nimble.

In light of these realities, Renewable Northwest has for some time been recommending that the Commission undertake an investigation like the one contemplated by SB 978A. The many trends influencing the transition to a clean energy future highlight the need for examining the existing regulatory system and how it should adjust, while ensuring that utilities can be fairly compensated for their investments. We appreciate Commission staff’s openness to exploring these issues; should the Legislature move forward with SB 978A, we look forward to working with Commission staff and other stakeholders on the issues identified for investigation.

Though we are anxious for the Commission to begin investigating the issues described in SB 978A, we recognize that such an investigation is a massive undertaking that would likely take a significant amount of time to complete. Such an investigation—however important it may be—should not delay Oregon’s efforts to transition to a clean energy future and deliver on other landmark policies enacted by the Legislature. In particular, the Commission is still in the process of implementing SB 1547, the 2016 legislation that, among other things, increased Oregon’s Renewable Portfolio Standard and adopted a Community Solar Program. Both of these components are intended to spur new renewable energy development. We are eager to see SB 1547 implemented in a manner

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that fulfills the Legislature's intent in enacting the legislation, while at the same time, moving forward with investigating the important issues identified in SB 978A.

Renewable Northwest is pleased to support SB 978A, a significant step on the road toward achieving a clean energy future.

Sincerely,



Rikki Seguin
Policy Director
Renewable Northwest