

February 5, 2018

To:

House Committee on Energy and Environment
Chair Representative Ken Helm

Re: IN SUPPORT of House Bill 4001/Senate Bill 1507 – Clean Energy Jobs Bill

Dear Chair Helm and members of the committee,

I am writing to express my support for the Clean Energy Jobs Bill (HB4001/SB1507). In this written testimony I would like to highlight the urgency of your efforts, which have been years in the making. It is never the “right time” for much-needed, long-overdue policy change when it deviates from the status quo. Respectfully, I caution members of this committee against the strong pull of inertia when considering this bill during the 2018 short session. The time is ripe, and change, no matter how prudent, is always uncomfortable.

Our state’s fossil fuel habits are deeply entrenched, requiring thoughtful, just, and progressive remediation. This shift, via cap-and trade dynamics, must hold the value of our current industry in balance with the well-being of present and future Oregonians. This is what SB1507/HB4001 achieves. Though I urge this body to make a few important adjustments in the final bill, my primary concern is that we not lose sight of why we are urgently here in the first place:

- 1) **Ethical Obligation:** a) First, in the words of the ethicist Stephen Gardiner, we have an “intergenerational obligation” to promote the health and well-being not just of current Oregonians, but also of future citizens of our state. The decisions our state legislature makes (or does not make) today will profoundly affect the well-being of future Oregonians. Our undeserved control over future generations of Oregonians and their posterity must be checked by thoughtful environmental policy *now*. b) Secondly, we have an ethical duty to serve those least responsible for, and most affected by, climate pollution, including the poor, the working-class, indigenous populations, and communities of color. We have a challenge to ensure that our economic transition to renewables benefits all, with particular concern for those who are most negatively affected by climate change. In an effort to rise to this challenge, *I advise this body to strengthen the equitability and accountability of the Program Advisory Committee, placing those most affected by pollution/climate change in leadership positions.*
- 2) **Economic Opportunity:** Given the clear national and global trend away from fossil fuels to renewables, Oregon has the opportunity to become a bastion of innovation and 21st-century job creation. Much as Texas’s economic success was built on a foundation

of petroleum, Oregon has the opportunity to capitalize on our country's increasingly rapid transition to renewable energy. HB4001/SB1507 makes this leadership opportunity possible. This is not a bill of sacrifice; Oregon reaps significant economic benefits from being at the forefront of the new, increasingly renewable energy economy. In order to ensure that the Clean Energy Jobs Bill truly incentivizes Oregon's rapid transition to this new energy economy, *I urge that the final bill have no free allowances. Free allowances would de-incentivize an effective, economically robust transition to clean energy.*

- 3) **State Leadership:** The federal repeal of the Clean Power Plan and withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, among other actions, have made it clear that the federal government is no longer a reliable leader that can address the urgency of our climate crisis. The states, especially Oregon, are now in a position to assume this leadership role. Though HB4001/SB1507 is clearly for and by Oregon, we also have the opportunity to create a West Coast collaboration, joining California, Canada, and (possibly) Washington in reducing greenhouse gases through joint cap-and-trade approaches. The hope is that, through our regional example, similar cap-and-trade bills will be embraced across the country. Though HB4001/SB1507 clearly establishes Oregon as both a leader and an economic beneficiary of clean energy policies, *I hope that the final bill will permit Oregon-only offsets to ensure that our state fully reaps the benefits of our hard work.*

We are poised to reap substantial economic, health, and quality-of-life benefits from the Clean Energy Jobs Bill (HB4001/SB1507). Oregon has the opportunity to emerge as a clean energy leader, while fulfilling our ethical obligations to future generations and those most affected by climate change. I urge this body to cross the finish line and resist the pull of inertia.

Respectfully,

Wesley Allen
Portland, OR