

February 7, 2018

House Committee on Energy and the Environment
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Clean Energy Jobs Bills – HB 4001 and SB 1507

Dear Chair Dembrow, Chair Helm, and members of the Joint Committee:

The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) is an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from the following communities of color: African, African American, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, Native American, North African, Pacific Islander, and Slavic. Formed in 2001, the Coalition's mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children, and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice, and prosperity.

The CCC has a strong track record of engaging policymakers and other influential groups about issues important to our communities. The Coalition, however, had infrequently participated in environmental advocacy and CCC members were rarely consulted by environmental policymaking. In 2012, the CCC completed a robust strategic planning process, resulting in our first explicit environmental goals, signaling a new recognition by the Coalition and its members that environmental resources are a means to address traditional social service and community development goals. In response, the Coalition and its members have made significant investments to build our collective environmental and climate justice capacity, emerging as a core environmental constituency.

We envision connected, balanced, healthy and thriving communities framed through principles of environmental justice. We recognize and affirm our solidarity with communities of color and low-income populations around the globe, who have also been historically underserved by environmental programs and investments and underrepresented in decision-making on environmental policy. The CCC and its members understand that poorly designed climate solutions can increase disparities suffered by our communities (e.g., poor air quality, lack of investment, increasing energy costs, under-representation). Further, we know that just and transparent climate solutions can ensure economic, social, and environmental benefits that are led and shared by low-income populations and communities of color, and can build environmental wealth in their neighborhoods, businesses, and institutions. Over the long term, appropriate, equitable climate action can serve to both mitigate climate change and increase our communities' resilience in the face of climate threats.

We recognize and appreciate your leadership to take statewide climate action in 2018. We offer the following comments and recommendations that can strengthen the Legislature's ability to *name and frame racial justice in communities of color, immigrants and refugees, to align with the Coalition's mission* to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities, and to *address the urgent needs of our communities*:

Clean Energy Jobs moves environmental justice forward by:

- Recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate change on communities of color and low-income populations.
- Supporting targeted investments in most impacted communities. The allocation of program proceeds from industrial, utility and transportation sectors is a step in the right direction to resourcing those most impacted by climate change, who have long been underserved.
- Establishing inclusive governance. The bill creates an inclusive governance structure including program rulemaking, implementation, and oversight through a Program Advisory Committee and resourcing of the State's existing Environmental Justice Task Force.



We also call upon legislators to ensure that Clean Energy Jobs aligns with the Coalition's mission by strengthening key provisions in the bill, both to ensure the efficacy of the policy and that racial equity is centered in the bill. Key areas to strengthen include:

- Strengthen governance by ensuring the Program Advisory Committee's rulemaking and oversight extends to all components of the program. Add two additional representatives from Oregon Tribes and allow flexibility for funding avenues for the Environmental Justice Task Force.
- The bill must ensure Oregon's communities of color and sovereign tribal nations—who experience exacerbated disparities as a result of climate change—are considered when developing a methodology to identify communities that are impacted by and vulnerable to climate change. The bill should include a fully-resourced state study, including technical assistance, and process that evaluates predictors of climate change vulnerability.
- Representation of Oregon's tribes on the Program Advisory Committee should be increased and they should be explicitly eligible for the Climate Investment Fund.
- Environmental efficacy should be bolstered by limiting free allowances for energy-intensive trade exposed industries up to 25 percent and eliminating exemptions for coal, fluorinated gases, marine and aviation fuels, and other upstream and downstream sources.
- The bill should reduce offsets to meet compliance and ensure projects are based in Oregon and benefit local communities. While offset projects in Oregon may bring local benefit to communities in the state, we have concerns on the impact to frontline communities globally. These concerns include maintaining pollution hotspots in low-income communities of color in other jurisdictions; investing in projects with questionable additionality or environmental verifiability; and aiding the violation of indigenous land rights across the globe.
- Additionally, utility sector proceeds must be used not only to mitigate the impact of climate change, but to meet the existing unmet need for bill assistance, weatherization, and community-driven decarbonization strategies.
- The bill should direct the Public Utilities Commission to develop a low-income rate class, low-income discount, Percent of Income Payment Plan, or other program to easily target and reduce low-income customer energy bills, increase weatherization/energy efficiency programs, and allow for community driven decarbonization strategies.

Over the long term, appropriate, equitable climate action can serve to both mitigate climate change and increase our communities' resilience in the face of climate threats. We believe that Clean Energy Jobs is a step in this direction and urge the Legislature to pass a strong bill this session. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of this policy.

Please contact maggie@coalitioncommunitiescolor.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Margaret Tallmadge
Environmental Justice Manager
Coalition of Communities of Color

