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To: Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: February 7, 2019

RE: House Bill 2623

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee: Good afternoon, my name is Rhett Lawrence and I'm the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters in Oregon, I wanted to offer our support for House Bill 2623.

As an organization with a long history working to move beyond fossil fuels in Oregon, we believe that HB 2623 is worthy of your support. As you know, this legislation would institute a 10-year moratorium on hydraulic fracturing – or “fracking” – for oil and gas in our state. Given the indisputable impacts of fracking in other states on surface water, ground water, and public health, among other things, we would be very concerned if oil and gas fracking were to occur in Oregon.

However, since there are currently no oil or gas fracking operations in Oregon, there would be no immediate operational or economic impacts from imposing such a moratorium in our state. And since this moratorium currently applies only to oil and gas fracking, it would not affect similar hydraulic fracturing processes used for geothermal energy, such as those that have been proposed for the Newberry Volcano area in central Oregon.

Ultimately, what HB 2623 will do is allow us to take our time in figuring out how to address the known concerns about fracking for oil and gas before they become a problem here. And while we do not believe that there is any “safe” or environmentally responsible way to frack, this bill lets us take the time to look closely at the devastating impacts that oil and gas fracking has had across the country and figure out how to avoid such issues here. We cannot stand by and ignore the hazards that fracking could bring to our state, so we believe a moratorium is entirely appropriate.

For these reasons, we strongly support House Bill 2623 and we urge this Committee to do the same. Thank you very much for considering my comments and I'd be happy to answer any questions.