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## OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

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To: Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: February 28, 2019

RE: House Bill 2618

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee: On behalf of the more than 25,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club in Oregon, I am pleased to offer our enthusiastic support for House Bill 2618.

As an organization with a long history working in support of renewable energy in Oregon, we believe programs such as those proposed in HB 2618 are critical to the expansion of renewable energy in our state. For more than a decade, the Sierra Club operated its "Go Solar" program in Oregon and around the country to line up interested households with solar installers and ensure that they had access to all available incentives. After the Residential Energy Tax Credit (RETTC) was allowed to sunset, that program has grown dormant, leaving solar power out of reach for many households.

Solar energy is playing an increasingly important role in our state's renewable energy mix, and solar technology presents a wealth of job creation opportunities for our economy. As you know, HB 2618 will create a six-year rebate that will focus on helping low and middle-income homeowners, businesses, and apartment buildings to afford solar panels, which are excellent investments for both homeowners and businesses. And the bill has a set-aside to encourage projects that help low-income ratepayers, who would not be able to afford solar without a rebate.

Importantly, this bill will help restart the solar industry in Oregon, which has suffered dramatically since the expiration of the RETTC. This program could help those laid-off workers to be put back to work in our state and return some of the momentum that has been lost in this crucial employment and energy sector. For these reasons, we respectfully urge this Committee to pass House Bill 2611.

Thank you very much for considering my comments and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance to the Committee.