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To: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Rhett Lawrence, Sierra Club, Oregon Chapter

Date: March 7, 2019

RE: Senate Bill 508

Chair Dembrow and members of the Committee: My name is Rhett Lawrence and I'm the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. On behalf of the more than 25,000 Sierra Club members in Oregon, I am pleased to submit these comments on Senate Bill 508.

As an organization with a long history of working to combat the effects of climate disruption in Oregon, the Sierra Club was pleased to participate in the expansion of the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in the Clean Energy and Coal Transition bill in the 2016 session. That legislation bumped up the RPS to 50% by 2040 and required that out-of-state coal energy be eliminated from our energy mix by 2030. The "Coal to Clean" bill was a major step forward for the RPS in Oregon; if passed, SB 508 would be a decisive step backward.

As you all know, hydropower plays an integral role in our energy mix in the Northwest. And notwithstanding the clear impacts of large hydro on endangered salmon and steelhead species, the big power-producing dams in our region are here to stay and no one is advocating for their removal (the outdated and expensive low-power dams on the lower Snake River are another story). But allowing hydroelectricity from those large dams to count toward the RPS will seriously undercut the effectiveness and intention of that standard.

If utilities are allowed to include hydropower towards their contribution to the RPS, it will remove any incentive for them to move toward the true renewable energy solutions such as wind and solar that we need to be encouraging in our region. If Oregon is going to remain a state that is committed to meeting our climate goals while building up a clean energy economy based on renewables, we cannot afford to water down the RPS with a blanket acceptance of all hydropower. Doing so would greatly diminish the attractiveness of locating large-scale solar and wind projects in Oregon, pulling the rug out from under these burgeoning industries in our state and likely sending those jobs elsewhere.

And the truth is that the large utilities are already moving toward those truly renewable solutions and making impactful investments in large-scale solar and wind projects. We need to keep moving in that

direction and creating incentives for even more of those developments. And we need those clean energy industries in our state, with all the jobs that they will bring for Oregonians. We cannot allow hydropower to set us back on the progress we're already making as a region, and SB 508 would be a real setback.

For these reasons, the Sierra Club opposes Senate Bill 508 and we urge Committee members to do the same. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony and I'm happy to answer any questions.