



OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

1821 SE ANKENY ST • PORTLAND, OR 97214

PHONE (503) 238-0442 • FAX (503) 238-6281

OREGON.CHAPTER@SIERRACLUB.ORG

WWW.OREGON.SIERRACLUB.ORG

SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

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

From: Rhett Lawrence, Sierra Club, Oregon Chapter

Date: March 12, 2019

RE: Senate Bill 451

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 in opposition to Senate Bill 451.

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 451 would be a decisive step backward.

As with SB 508 in this session (which would add all hydropower to the RPS), Senate Bill 451 would seriously undercut the effectiveness and intention of the renewable standard. For starters, it is hard to conceive how the burning of household garbage – including plastics and other even more potentially toxic substances – can be considered a renewable energy source. Such activities would have their own climate impacts, which is exactly what we are trying to get away from with the RPS. The Covanta facility in Marion County, for instance, is one of the biggest CO2 emitters in Oregon.

In addition to moving our state off fossil fuels and other problematic energy sources, one of the impetuses behind the RPS was to foster the creation of more wind and solar energy in Oregon, with all the jobs and other economic benefits those industries bring. Adding municipal solid waste burning to the RPS would lessen the incentive to move toward the true renewable energy solutions 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 by adding garbage burning to the standard.

For these reasons, the Sierra Club opposes Senate Bill 451 and we urge Committee members to do the same. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony and please let me know if I may be of any further assistance to the committee.