



April 2, 2019

To: Chair Helm and Members of the House Energy & Environment Committee
From: Jaimes Valdez, Policy Manager, Spark Northwest
RE: Letter in Support of HB 2494, Extending the Public Purpose Charge

Dear Chair Helm and members of the House Committee on Energy & the Environment,

As a regional nonprofit organization focused on helping communities engage in locally-controlled clean energy, we are pleased to support HB 2494, the extension of the public purpose charge. Over the past 16 years, Spark Northwest has helped residential customers and small agricultural producers in Oregon make the switch to solar energy, wind power, and energy efficient equipment. Through education and technical assistance, we provide tools for people of all income levels to lower their energy costs and invest in their communities.

Our mission is significantly enhanced by the programs and organizations supported by the Public Purpose Charge, including Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) and Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS). These agencies and the services they provide are vital to the well-being of Oregonians and our state's goals to reduce and diversify energy use. The public purpose charge directs 3% of customer energy bills to help fund low-income weatherization, as well as market development of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. These are programs that utilities, on their own, would not be incentivized to deploy. While I don't have access to the full 2018 report, the Energy Trust reports that as of 2017, their programs have saved customers over \$3.2 billion in energy costs, and added over \$6.3 billion of activity to Oregon's economy. The structure of Oregon's public purpose charge is a foundation that other states have looked to as well as a success story, in implementing the transition to greater energy efficiency and clean energy.

I have the pleasure of serving on the ETO Renewable Advisory Committee (RAC) and have been involved in the development of the Strategic Plan, as well as efforts to support greater participation in renewable energy projects serving low-income customers. In general, Energy Trust is taking a more wholistic approach to the delivery of incentives and creating better access for Oregonians in greatest need of energy savings, through their Savings Within Reach program. These are positive efforts that should continue, and HB 2494 simply creates greater certainty for the existence of this foundational piece of energy policy in Oregon, ensuring that Energy Trust and OHCS can continue to serve and provide customers with needed energy incentives, direct weatherization assistance, education, and market transformation guidance.

We encourage you to pass HB 2494 through committee, appreciate your consideration of this issue, and look forward to remaining engaged in this process.

Sincerely,

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