



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 3, 2021

To: Senate Energy and Environment Committee
Senator Lee Beyer, Chair

Re: **SB 589** – Regional Transmission Organization – **Support**

The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and planet. We support climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations. Individuals, communities, and governments must continue to address this issue, while considering the ramifications of their decision, at all levels—local, state, regional, national, and global.

We are pleased that PUC has opened a docket on resource adequacy. We believe that evaluating the participation in a regional transmission organization is a desirable step and therefore support SB 589.

Oregon has been fortunate until now in having access to enough electricity from hydroelectric and fossil-fuel generation to satisfy its needs most of the time. In order to support our peak demand, occurring in winter, we have been able to buy cheap unused power from southern states, while they buy our unused power in the summer. However, climate change is causing changes in the times and amounts of demand. For example, summer temperatures are increasing in the northern states, leading to more demand for air conditioning. Excursions of the polar vortex are already causing extremely low temperatures throughout large portions of the country at the same time.

The actions being taken to mitigate the effects of climate change are also affecting the ability to provide sufficient, reliable electricity. Coal-fired plants will no longer be providing power to Oregon and restrictions may be made on natural gas. The primary renewable alternatives, solar and wind, are intermittent, so need to be supplemented by storage or other power sources. In addition, there is a move to convert other users of fossil fuels, such as transportation and residential users, to electricity, thus increasing the demand.

For these reasons, the ability to satisfy all needs by accessing power from other areas on short notice will not be sufficient; long-range planning will be needed to ensure future demands can be met. Continued cooperation with neighboring states in a regional transmission organization will help tailor the development of Oregon’s future electricity system. We are pleased that SB 589 includes “resource adequacy requirements, regional infrastructure investments in response to potential growth in demand for electric energy or potential changes in energy production, renewable energy resource interconnection and integration, and electricity system decarbonization.”

Thank you for the opportunity to support this legislation.

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