



March 9, 2021

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 784 – SUPPORT for Sections 2 and 3

Chair Beyer, Vice Chair Findley and Members of the Committee,

We write in support of sections 2 and 3 of SB 784 as creating helpful new tools for local communities in their transition to a cleaner, more resilient energy system. We are still reviewing the details of the other sections, but also support the concept of creating responsible labor standards for large-scale renewable energy projects. Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis.

Section 2 of SB 784 authorizes the PUC to approve measures that, among other things, enable our utilities to work with local governments and communities to create more resilient community centers and other facilities as places to go during a major disaster. Utilizing clean energy solutions like solar paired with battery storage, along with the ability to “island,” these facilities will be able to provide power, heat, and needed resources to our communities during an emergency like an earthquake or major storm. With the climate crisis fueling stronger disasters in Oregon like the ice storm in February and wildfires last September, not to mention looming earthquakes, we need to prepare our local communities to be more resilient now, and clean energy can provide the tools for greater resiliency.

Section 3 of SB 784 enables local governments to partner with the utility on a community-wide green energy program that can meet the needs of the local community. Importantly, this program is voluntary and the local government can choose to opt-in to have a new way to provide electricity sourced from clean energy projects more quickly than the overall grid will clean up. This program is complimentary to legislation to transition the entire state’s electricity mix to 100% clean energy by 2040. It allows willing jurisdictions to move further, faster to meet their residents’ desire for clean energy and their local climate action goals. Providing flexibility to local governments in designing their clean energy future is important, and protections for low-income customers are critical.

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meredith Connolly".

Meredith Connolly
Oregon Director
Climate Solutions