



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Carmen Rubio, Commissioner
Dan Ryan, Commissioner
Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner
Mingus Mapps, Commissioner

March 22, 2021

Representative Pam Marsh, Chair
House Energy and Environment Committee
900 Court St. NE, HR D
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland strongly supports 100% Clean Energy for All. We recognize the critical need to invest in a swift transition to clean and renewable energy, while reducing energy costs for low-income people and the most vulnerable individuals in our communities. The City stands behind policy solutions, like 100% Clean Energy for All, that are developed and led by frontline communities, including future amendments to HB 2021.

In 2017, the City adopted the 100% Renewable Energy Resolution, which established a goal for Portland's carbon-producing economic sectors – buildings, energy supply, and transportation – to become 100 percent renewable by 2050. In 2020, in recognition of the accelerating climate crisis, we passed the Climate Emergency Declaration. This resolution established more aggressive carbon emissions reduction targets for Portland: a 50 percent reduction by 2030 and net zero carbon emissions by 2050. It also advanced the goal for Portland to be powered by 100 percent clean and renewable electricity by five years – from 2035 to 2030. Both resolutions frame our local climate work in context of justice and equity: recognizing and correcting past harms and accelerating investments in projects that benefit frontline communities. HB 2021 is important legislation that will bring state climate and energy goals in closer alignment with adopted City policy, which benefits all Oregonians as well as Portlanders.

HB 2021 will establish a critical goalpost for electric utility decarbonization throughout the state. It should also create opportunity to increase local community ownership of energy, job opportunities, and regional economic development. Critical to the just transition away from fossil fuels, the bill must establish strong labor and environmental justice standards. Getting to 100% clean energy should create opportunities for Oregonians who need good jobs and community energy projects the most. Future amendments must uphold community-driven priorities and values.

Globally, the burning of fossil fuels was responsible for 20 percent of deaths in 2018 and exposure to pollution from facilities like gas-fired power plants leads to worse outcomes from COVID-19. By setting clear targets for cleaning up Oregon's electricity, supporting community-based energy projects and creating good jobs for local communities, we can seize the opportunity of clean energy to help rebuild from today's many crises.

The legislation also provides essential opportunities to increase the resilience of Oregon's electricity sector. The last 12 months have underscored with fierce urgency the importance of renewable, resilient power systems that can withstand disruption from an increasingly unstable climate. Decentralized renewable energy (for example, building- and community-scale solar paired with battery back-up systems) provides resilient power and also represents a major opportunity for high-quality employment in areas of Oregon that have struggled economically for decades.

We recognize that the -1 amendment to the bill incorporates policy elements that allow for the creation of municipally-authorized green tariff products, allowing cities and counties to meet their climate goals on an accelerated timeline. While we support this overall direction, we have concerns about some of the procurement and process elements that amendment outlines. For example, responsible and equitable labor standards should apply to all clean energy projects enabled by this bill, not solely those that arise from a municipal green tariff program. Further, some components of the amendment should be considered in rulemaking, rather than prescribed in statute.

Portland City Council is pleased to support and to be a part of the diverse coalition of organizations and communities behind 100% Clean Energy for All. The coalition bridges the urban-rural divide and brings together community-based and culturally specific organizations, environmental justice groups, traditionally privileged environmental groups, and local jurisdictions. We are all in pursuit of a common goal and shared vision – a just transition to a clean energy economy. The City of Portland urges your support of HB 2021, with amendments that center the needs of frontline communities and provide for equitable clean energy opportunities.

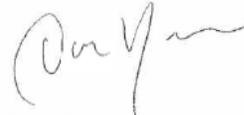
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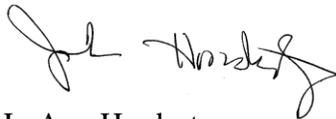
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