

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the House Committee on Energy & Environment,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimony in strong support of House Bill 2021, the 100% Clean Energy for All bill, with the -5 and -9 amendments.

I am a Portlander of 20 years, raised on the Mississippi Gulf Coast where the impacts of climate chaos nearly destroyed my home community and threaten it again every hurricane season. I have two college-age children (young adults now, but forever my children). I think every day about what kind of climate and society they, and all the young people I hold dear, will make their lives in, through the decades ahead. I am also a social science researcher who works on understanding how our community connections can make us healthier and more resilient. And finally, because of all I know and feel, I am a climate justice activist, working as part of the volunteer board of 350PDX.

Both as a social scientist and as an activist, I know that a transition to 100% non-fossil fuel energy is a necessity, but how we make this transition - whether it happens in an equitable and inclusive way - is not something we can take for granted. House Bill 2021, with the inclusion of amendments -5 and -9, will provide us with a strong framework and real timelines to get to the clean energy economy that Oregon needs, and within the 20 year timeframe that gives us the best chance of minimizing global heating. It includes key practices like ensuring community review of energy project impacts, and ensuring livable wages and other important labor protections, that will maximize the benefits to communities struggling through the pandemic and exposed to the ongoing risk of wildfire, one of the most visible and stark dangers of climate chaos in Oregon.

House Bill 2021 will empower communities to create and own local projects, such as solar plus storage, that will make them more resilient both against natural disasters and against economic fluctuations. With the -5 and -9 amendments, community benefits agreements and rate caps would also help protect those community members being harmed by current energy practices, ensuring their disadvantages are addressed and setting us on a path to more equitable energy impacts for all Oregonians. There are many intelligent, strong policies added by amendments -5 and -9, but one more that I would like to single out in my testimony is the proposed ban on new fossil fuel energy project sites. This is a goal I work towards every day in my life, because every dollar invested in fossil fuel infrastructure is a dead end, money and human capacity sunk into projects that we know are not the future. It will mean so much to have our state government acknowledge this and firmly embrace the path towards clean energy and inclusive resilience. We can get to 100% clean energy, and we can get there together, with no one left out. House Bill 2021, with amendments -5 and -9, lays out both a vision and practical steps for making this a reality, and I strongly urge you to support it.

Thank you,  
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Board President, 350PDX