

May 13, 2021

House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for House Bill 2021-A

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Pham, Reschke, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 2021A and strongly urge passage of the bill this year. I live in Portland and organize with two different communities of volunteers. The Metro Climate Action Team (sponsored by the OLCV) works toward making Oregon a leader in addressing the climate crisis. OCEAN works toward the responsible development of the immense energy resource contained in the offshore wind on Oregon's south coast. The climate crisis is now the overarching global threat and how we deal with it will ultimately determine our success as a functioning society. Energy is at the core of everything we do, make or use. Done right, transitioning to 100% clean electricity can revitalize key sectors of Oregon's economy and create good paying jobs across the state. HB 2021 is a critical step towards these important goals.

The signs of climate distress are all around us and sufficient efforts to address the problem are long overdue. Within the last year deadly wildfires and disruptive ice storms have brought great harm to many Oregonians and to our economy. A new study co-authored by a professor at OSU's College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences details the unprecedented combination of meteorological conditions that drove last year's catastrophic wildfires in the Oregon Cascades and notes "the weather and fire forecasts for this coming summer are not looking particularly good, either". Each year we delay, emissions accumulate, temperatures increase, the consequences become more dire and we get closer to the tipping point where the escalating crisis may become unstoppable. Continuing to delay the actions needed to mitigate further damage to the climate is incomprehensible, particularly when we know the solution (renewable energy) will be less expensive than what is causing the problem (fossil fuels).

Carbon Tracker's April 2021 report estimates at current growth rates solar and wind power could price fossil fuels out of the world's electricity markets by the mid-2030s. Renewable energy is already elbowing out competition from fossil fuels. New solar and wind capacity made up a whopping 90 percent of the power sector's growth globally last year, according to the

International Energy Agency. That was a 45 percent rise in renewables last year compared to the year before, despite the global pandemic which reduced almost all other types of business activity. The May 2021 IEA report goes on to say the “exceptionally high” growth in 2020 is the “new normal.” Nevada, Washington, California, and even the largest utility in Idaho, have all pledged to go to 100% clean energy. With the passage of HB 2021, Oregon can join that group and signal the market that its abundant wind and solar resources are available and ready for responsible development. In addition to the climate benefits, this would bring family wage jobs to Oregonians especially those in rural areas.

A good example is offshore wind as envisioned in the study bill HB 3375A that targets 3 gigawatts by 2030. The National Renewable Energy Lab has estimated Oregon’s theoretical offshore wind resource is 62 gigawatts. A 2020 study by the Pacific Northwest National Lab concluded Oregon’s existing transmission lines could accommodate 2 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity. Bringing that energy in from the ocean would allow additional energy integration from the east allowing new solar capacity to flow west from central Oregon to load centers along the I-5 corridor. This is currently constrained by congested transmission. If developers choose Coos Bay as a marshalling port, it would establish the south coast as a regional hub for the build-out of offshore wind farms. Similar hubs in Europe have resulted in thousands of new jobs. This could bring welcome relief to this region’s economy that has suffered from the loss of timber and fishing jobs due, in part, to the adverse effects of climate change. It would also increase their energy resiliency and security.

In March, the Biden/Harris administration set a goal to deploy 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. According to the announcement ***“this target will trigger more than \$12 billion per year in capital investment in projects on both U.S. coasts, create tens of thousands of good-paying, union jobs, with more than 44,000 workers employed in offshore wind by 2030 and nearly 33,000 additional jobs in communities supported by offshore wind activity”***.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Michael Mitton
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