



Co-Chairs Dembrow and Pham
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

February 27, 2023

RE: HB 5016 – SUPPORT

Dear Co-chairs Dembrow and Pham, and members of the committee,

Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a statewide nonprofit that advances innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon’s environmental challenges for today and future generations. Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis. **On behalf of our thousands of members statewide, we urge you to support HB 5016, a bill that would provide biennial funding for the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE).**

Recent climate-fueled extreme weather events and continued global gas price volatility have made clearer than ever the need to maintain a resilient and affordable energy system. It is therefore essential that the legislature adequately fund the Oregon Department of Energy, an agency with a mission to do just that. ODOE works on behalf of Oregonians to lead our state to a safe, clean, and sustainable energy future, and plays a critical role in responsibly balancing energy needs and impacts and protecting Oregon’s environment and public health. Particularly with new state policies and programs and historic federal investments in clean energy positioned to reshape Oregon’s energy needs and future, it is critical that the legislature support full funding for ODOE.

Our organizations believe that Oregon is stronger and better positioned to navigate the innovations and changes in energy sectors if our state energy department is well-resourced and able to provide decision-makers with technical and policy expertise. Along with many others across the state, OEC and Climate Solutions look to ODOE to provide technical expertise, data, and thought leadership on energy policy. The 2022 Oregon Biennial Energy Report and ODOE studies and reports on regional transmission, renewable hydrogen, small-scale renewable energy projects, energy siting, floating offshore wind are just a few recent examples. In addition, ODOE plays an important role in ensuring energy safety, including oversight of legacy nuclear energy issues, and in the siting of new energy facilities. An effective ODOE requires adequate resources to support these functions.

As Oregon’s chief agency responsible for matters related to energy production, conservation and related safety and environmental impacts, ODOE has a critical role to play in helping the state achieve its climate goals, including by supporting and coordinating across other agencies’ emission reduction activities. As a powerhouse of information, data and policy analytics, ODOE can help inform and ensure the strongest possible climate policy outcomes. With this in mind, our organizations especially support full funding for ODOE’s Energy Planning &

Innovation Division, which is responsible for efficiency standards, policy analysis and staff support for the Oregon Global Warming Commission.

Likewise, adequate funding and staff support for the agency is vital to ensuring success as ODOE develops and launches new legislatively-established incentive programs, including funding to continue the Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program; funding to support energy-efficient rebuilding efforts following the 2020 wildfires; a \$50 million community renewable energy grant program; and new rebate programs to expand access to heat pumps in Oregon homes. With this in mind, our organizations support full funding for ODOE's Energy Development & Planning Division, which is responsible for administering these and other grants and rebates to tribes, businesses, households, nonprofits, and the public sector to help Oregonians implement conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy projects.

Further, ODOE will have a key role to play in ensuring effective, equitable implementation of unprecedented federal investments in climate and clean energy programs and incentives. The combined investments of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) present a historic opportunity to supercharge the benefits of Oregon's existing climate programs and policies, drive down the cost of living for Oregon families, boost job creation in our existing clean-energy economy, and help Oregon communities prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Ensuring our state energy department has the resources capacity needed to apply for and administer potentially billions of dollars in federal funding will be vital to securing the full economic and climate potential of these laws, and translating these investments into meaningful benefits for Oregon families and communities.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support HB 5016.

Sincerely,

Nora Apter
Climate Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council

Greer Ryan
Clean Buildings Policy Manager
Climate Solutions