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March 2, 2022

Co-Chair Michael Dembrow
Co-Chair Khanh Pham
Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 5020 - Department of Forestry Budget

Dear Co-Chair Dembrow, Co-Chair Pham, and members of the subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of HB 5020, the Oregon Department of Forestry's budget. The Department provides critical services in forest management and wildfire mitigation which are of utmost importance to the state's overall wildfire mitigation efforts. As the threat of wildfire continues to grow with a changing climate, funding the agency appropriately is vital.

PGE is a fully integrated electric utility that serves over 900,000 customers with a service area population of 2 million Oregonians in six counties and 51 incorporated cities. As Oregonians, we share the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and deliver our customers a clean energy future. As we work to reduce GHG emissions from the power served to customers to meet the requirements of HB 2021 (2021), we are laser-focused on keeping electricity reliable and affordable for all customers.

In 2020, Oregonians became all too familiar with the damage and destruction that wildfire can pose to both urban and rural communities. When the weather conditions threatened our ability to safely operate our system, we activated the first ever Public Safety Power Shutoff in the state. During the 2021 Legislative session, PGE supported the passage of SB 762, the state's omnibus legislation. The all hands on deck framework in the bill acknowledged the importance of everyone working together to reduce the threat of wildfire in the state. As an electric utility, we are one of the many stakeholders that play an important role in reducing the risk of wildfire. While we have always worked with ODF field staff in various capacities for our operations throughout the state, the work and partnership has increased significantly within the last three years including coordination on wildfire detection cameras. We are grateful for the collaborative approach the agency has taken as well as the consultation they have provided as we evaluate wildfire risk in the areas in which we have infrastructure.

Climate change is rapidly accelerating the threat of wildfire throughout the state, making the job of the ODF increasingly more critical. The investments and programs that were identified in SB 762 are an important piece of the state's overall ability to reduce the threat of wildfire. We strongly encourage the full funding of the ODF budget and respectfully request that additional dollars be allocated to fully fund the critical work of continuing SB 762 programs, including the Small Forestland Grant program and Landscape Resiliency Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sania Radcliffe".

Sania Radcliffe
Director of Government Affairs and Environmental Policy