



March 17, 2023

Chair Kathleen Taylor
Vice Chair Daniel Bonham
Senate Committee on Labor & Business
900 Court Street NW
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Requesting amendment to SB 907, Relating to employees' rights to refuse to perform certain work assignments.

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham and Members of the Committee:

Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association (OMEU) is made up of eleven municipally owned and operated electric utilities. The Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA) represents eighteen electric cooperatives. As consumer-owned utilities (COUs) we are directly accountable to the people we serve through our city councils and local governing boards.

In testimony provided by chief sponsor Senator Patterson on SB 907, it was noted that an amendment is being developed to clearly exclude some classes of public safety employees from exercising the right to refuse to perform certain employer assigned tasks causing reasonable apprehension that the work could result in serious injury or impairment to health and safety. Senator Patterson mentioned the amendment would carve out police, firefighters, and correctional workers.

Electric utility workers also conduct similar public safety work that might be viewed as "inherently dangerous." Our line workers are often called to work in challenging conditions to restore power after storm events. Of course, the safety of our workers and the public is our utmost concern, and we follow all applicable OSHA and PUC safety rules. In some cases, restoration of power must wait until worker safety can be assured.

Given the critical public safety function that electric line workers perform, we respectfully ask that the Committee add utility operations workers to the list of excluded workers in the amendment. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Joly, Director, Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association jenniferjoly@omeu.org

Ted Case, Executive Director, Oregon Rural Electric Cooperatives Association tcase@oreca.org