



April 8, 2023

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: SB 5506 (& HB 5016) - Support

Co-chairs Steiner and Sanchez, members of the Committee,

My name is Michael Mitton and I live in NW Portland. I am testifying on behalf of the Metro Climate Action Team, which is a community of volunteers working to advance sound climate policy and ensure Oregon is a leader in addressing the climate crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of a strong, strategic, climate-smart 2023-25 biennium budget. Oregon has a critical opportunity to leverage historic federal funding for Oregon and drive smart investments that will improve public health, cut climate pollution, create family-wage jobs, and drive down costs for Oregonians across the state.

Unfortunately, key investments outlined in the People's Budget, including those needed to increase climate resilience, are not adequately funded under the Co-Chairs Budget Framework.

Legislators must invest in climate and communities now - rather than reserving even more revenue in our already strong and healthy rainy-day fund.

Our primary focus is on HR 5016, which will provide funding for the Oregon Department of Energy. Ever-worsening climate impacts across the state have made it *clearer than ever* that we need to reduce emissions and protect Oregon communities on the frontline of climate impacts. Energy is at the core of everything we do, make or use. Two years ago, Oregon passed the landmark Clean Energy Targets bill (HB 2021) requiring major utilities serving electricity in Oregon to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2040. Meeting this ambitious goal will need ODOE to contribute to a comprehensive energy strategy to ensure all Oregonians receive the significant social and economic benefits from developing the extraordinary renewable resources situated throughout the state. ODOE will need to consider the many challenges and substantial opportunities to achieve an optimal clean energy future. We strongly urge your support of the Policy Option Packages that relate to the responsible development of Oregon's abundant wind and solar, transitioning to these intermittent distributed resources, identifying required transmission upgrades, deploying large amounts of storage and other changes to the grid. We especially appreciate POP 102 that proposes an Energy Research Fund. This will enable ODOE to continue building on its previous studies on floating offshore wind, renewable hydrogen and transmission solutions like RTO's. Oregon currently imports a substantial amount of fossil-generated electricity. However, our abundant wind and solar resources could replace that dirty energy as well as export significant amounts of clean energy to neighboring states thereby creating promising new industries. A recent PBS [story](#) cited authors of Princeton's Net-Zero America project saying "the best wind potential in the country, if not the world, is off the Northern California and Southern Oregon coast".



Other critical programs include the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program, the Oregon Solar plus Storage Rebate Program, the Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Program, and new Heat Pump Programs to channel federal incentives to Oregonians.

Although the funding for implementation of these programs is significant relative to the gaps in the state budget, the costs of inaction—meaning failure to achieve science-based emission reduction targets—may be higher than the state’s economy can bear. Climate change is already producing devastating impacts in Oregon, and the destruction caused by recent climate-influenced weather events and natural disasters, such as wildfires, droughts, and unprecedented heat waves, have already cost lives and generated billions of dollars in costs to Oregonians and to the state budget.

These critical ODOE support POPs are needed to ensure the enacted programs reduce climate pollution and protect public health while creating cleaner, cheaper, and healthier energy options that will also create jobs and economic development to benefit Oregonians.

For these reasons, the Metro Climate Action Team strongly urges you to support HB 5016 and other critical investments in the People’s Budget.

Metro Climate Action Team Steering Committee:

Brett Baylor, Rick Brown, Linda Craig, Pat DeLaquil, Dan Frye, Debby Garman, KB Mercer, Michael Mitton, Rich Peppers, Rand Schenck, Jane Stackhouse, and Catherine Thomasson