

February 7, 2024

To: Representative Pam Marsh, Chair, House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee  
Representative Emerson Levy, Vice Chair, House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee  
Representative Bobby Levy, Vice Chair, House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee  
Members of the House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee  
From: Emily Griffith, Oregon Policy Manager, Renewable Northwest  
**Re: Support for HB4015**

*ORAL TESTIMONY AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY*

Good afternoon, Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Levy, Vice-Chair Levy, and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Emily Griffith, Oregon Policy Manager for Renewable Northwest. Renewable Northwest (“RNW”) is a regional, non-profit renewable energy advocacy organization based here in Oregon, dedicated to decarbonizing the region by accelerating the transition to renewable electricity. Our members include renewable energy developers, environmental organizations, and consumer groups.

I am here today testifying in support of HB 4015. HB 4015 does three things. Adds a definition of Battery Energy Storage Systems (“BESS”) in state statute, states that a battery sited in location with an existing generating facility does not require a separate, additional site certificate, and most importantly, clarifies that BESS projects may be permitted at the Energy Facility Siting Council (“EFSC”).

This bill concept was first discussed at The Siting Table, which was an effort co-convened by Verde, Renewable Northwest, and 1000 Friends of Oregon to have a collaborative conversation on renewable energy siting last year. This concept needed additional conversation and deliberation and did not advance during the 2023 Legislative Session. This past fall, Rep. Marsh convened a workgroup to continue the discussion on BESS which included a broad group of stakeholders representing renewable energy developers, agriculture, local government, and environmental and land use groups, among others.

The state of Oregon currently employs two methods for permitting most energy facilities. These two methods are 1. With the local county, or 2. Through the Energy Facility Siting Council. Developers and counties each have the option to send certain projects to EFSC. This gives both the local county government and developers more flexibility. It should also be mentioned that EFSC is required to do a consistency review with the local government prior to making a recommendation of approval, conditional approval, or refusal.

Oregon state law has not yet updated these permitting pathways to also be available to stand-alone battery energy storage systems. Currently, the only route for permitting stand-alone battery energy storage systems is at the county level: EFSC does not have jurisdiction over BESS, and many counties do not have BESS ordinances. This leaves an important grid resource with limited options to come to fruition in a time when the state needs more clean energy storage quickly.

We have heard from our developer members, some of whom developed Oregon's first, leading BESS projects, and from conversations at the workgroup, that the option to permit stand-alone batteries at EFSC would help solve this problem. It is not the *complete* solution -- conversations are ongoing about how to address other permitting challenges for BESS. But permitting at EFSC is an option that, when made available to stand-alone batteries, will provide flexibility while maintaining thorough land use review and scrutiny.

To meet the State of Oregon's existing Clean Energy Mandates and to provide resilience for communities throughout the state, we need more stand-alone storage, and we need it online as quickly as possible. Major utilities in Oregon are planning to procure 4-6 GWs of storage over the next 20 years<sup>12</sup> - enough to power up to 4.5 million homes. Adding stand-alone batteries to the list of facilities that can be permitted at EFSC will help support Oregon communities and will help the state reach our climate goals and increase our resiliency

We appreciate Chair Marsh and the workgroup's effort to come to consensus language on this bill and look forward to future conversations about BESS in Oregon. Thank you again for the opportunity to express Renewable Northwest's support for HB 4015.

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<sup>1</sup> PacifiCorp's Amended 2023 [Integrated Resource Plan](#), Figure I.1 Preferred Portfolio Resource and Transmission Map, Page 183

<sup>2</sup> Portland General Electric Company's 2023 [Clean Energy Plan and Integrated Resource Plan](#) Reply to Staff Round 2 Comments and Recommendations, Table 4 and 5 Preferred Portfolio Resource Pathways, Page 39