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Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Levy, and the other members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and the Environment,

I'm writing today on behalf of Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN), its Legislative Team, and its Climate, Energy, and Environment Team to express our support for HB 4015. COIN is a network of over 40 Indivisible groups located across Oregon, including Oregon's more rural counties, that collaborate to protect democracy and implement progressive values through voter outreach and education, campaigns, and elections, holding our elected leaders accountable, and advocating for legislation that best reflects our values.

I had the opportunity to view yesterday's public hearing on this bill and read the written testimony. We appreciate that Representative Marsh convened a working group to explore the issues around Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and that this working group included a wide range of stakeholders representing renewable energy developers, local government, agriculture, environmental and land use groups, and other parties. This sort of insightful information-sharing and consensus-building reminds us that democracy can still work. Thank you.

As several people who offered public testimony reminded us, Oregon has set an ambitious goal of 100% clean energy by 2040. And we know that a clean and just energy future will be critical to our quest to reach our state's important climate commitments. And yet, in 2020, we met less than 9% of our demand from electricity generated from wind, solar, and geothermal sources. Since most forms of renewable energy, including wind and solar, are intermittent (the wind does not always blow, and the sun does not always shine) they cannot always be counted on to generate electricity at the very moment we need it. Therefore, energy storage will be essential for ensuring that renewable energy options will be as effective and reliable as possible as we integrate more renewable energy sources into our power grid. Battery storage is not the only storage option, but it is an essential tool. It can help to reduce electricity blackouts, support grid resiliency by providing more distributed and local grid options, decrease exclusive reliance on long-range transmission options, and provide other services to enhance grid reliability when they are most needed.

HB 4015 updates the site permitting options by allowing developers or local governments the option of deferring the permitting of stand-alone battery energy storage systems to the state's Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC). The EFSC does not currently have jurisdiction over BESS, and we understand that some Oregon counties do not have BESS ordinances and the staff resources to do the careful site permitting analysis that is required. Providing two permitting

pathway options will enhance flexibility and help Oregon developers install more energy storage options at a more rapid rate. It will still ensure that the necessary land use review and scrutiny occurs. We are pleased to see that the EFSC will be required to do a consistency review with the local government prior to making a recommendation of approval, conditional approval, or refusal. We are pleased to see that this legislation is supported by the Association of Oregon Counties as well as environmental and ratepayer advocacy groups.

We appreciate that providing the option of using the EFSC to permit stand-alone batteries will not address all the permitting challenges. But it will enhance grid resiliency and help us move closer to our clean energy and climate goals. For these reasons, we support HB 4015 and encourage this committee to endorse this bill and help it move through the legislative process.

Respectfully,

Jeff Hammarlund, on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network,  
COIN's Legislative Team, and COIN's Climate Energy and Environment Team