



Oregon
Rural
Electric
Cooperative
Association

February 13, 2024

Chair Sollman
Vice Chair Findley
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NW
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: SB 1525 – Community Renewable Energy Grant Program -4 Amendment
Technical Fix**

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and members of the committee,

My name is Tucker Billman, and I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association, or ORECA. ORECA represents the state's 18 not-for-profit electric cooperatives that serve 65 percent of the State's land mass and 500,000 Oregonians. I am offering testimony on Senate Bill 1525.

Seven of ORECA's member-cooperatives are also members of the Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative, or PNGC. PNGC is a generation cooperative whose express purpose is to aggregate and acquire wholesale resources for some of Oregon's electric cooperatives. PNGC is incorporated as a cooperative and operates as one – PNGC observes the seven cooperative principles and is governed by a board of directors representing each of their member cooperatives.

When the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program, or C-REP, was initially established it was built as a program targeting public bodies and consumer-owned utilities, like Oregon's Electric Cooperatives. However, subsequent legal analysis determined that entities like PNGC were ineligible applicants. PNGC and its member cooperatives have considered various projects that, themselves, may fit the scope of the C-REP program. However, as PNGC is not considered an eligible applicant, those projects are currently shelved.

ORECA thanks the Oregon Department of Energy for the -4 amendment to SB 1525, which serves as a technical fix ensuring that entities like PNGC are eligible applicants for the C-

REP program. This amendment, if passed, would create a pathway for PNGC to pursue C-REP grants that will benefit the entirety of their membership – meaning the reach of the benefits derived from this amendment spans electric cooperative member-owners across the State of Oregon. We encourage your support of the -4 amendment to SB 1525.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. If there are further questions from the committee, please do not hesitate to contact me at tbillman@oreca.org.

Tucker Billman
Director of Government Relations
Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association