

Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

610 SW Broadway, Suite 400
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February 13, 2024

To: Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy Manager,, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB)

Re: Support for SB 1581 - Regional Transmission Planning Reporting

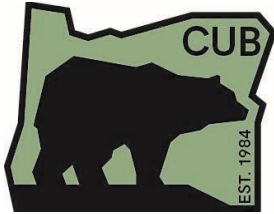
The Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) is a statewide, membership-based 501(c)3 nonprofit consumer advocacy developed by citizens' initiative in 1984. CUB represents the interests of Oregon households by advocating for utility regulations and policies that protect your wallet. To date, we have saved Oregonians almost \$10 billion. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1581.

CUB supports SB 1581 because we believe regional transmission planning is a critical component of ensuring a reliable and flexible energy grid. Regional planning can help us meet our future energy needs affordably and can help usher in a more rapid energy transition. With regional transmission planning, transmission related buildouts have the ability to be more strategically and cost-effectively planned—transmission-related costs can be spread out across utilities and could mean we may need to build less resources. The reality is that we need transmission, and regional planning should get us to our end goal of least cost to customers. As CUB's Executive Director, Bob Jenks, stated last week:

When Advanced Energy United commissioned a study on the economic benefits of a Western RTO, researchers found that Oregon would save nearly \$200 million every year in a regional market that includes all 11 Western states.¹

Regional planning can also help with grid reliability. We need to be able to meet our capacity needs during times of high winter energy usage, also known as winter peaking capacity. With access to more resources in other regions, Oregon will be more likely able to manage that while meeting our clean energy goals.

¹ Bob Jenks, "What utility commissioners should know about a flawed Western day-ahead market study," Utility Dive (Feb. 9, 2024) (accessible at <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/puc-western-markets-exploratory-group-wmeg-study-rto-day-ahead/706816/>).



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CUB also acknowledges that there are regional conversations happening. And the Oregon Public Utility Commission and Oregon's electric investor-owned utilities are having these discussions.² For example, in PGE's most recent integrated resource plan process at the PUC, the PUC recommended the Company conduct a transmission study, and PGE committed to completing this study before it files its planning update next year.³

We know that Oregon has some of the most ambitious climate and energy goals in the nation, and because of this it makes sense that Oregon policymakers are informed on and supportive of regional transmission planning efforts and barriers. A regional system can bring us a reliable system at least cost. All Oregonians have a stake in successful utility regional transmission planning. With regional planning and transparency in how planning is conducted, we can keep sight of customer interest.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jennifer Hill-Hart
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² See meeting materials from the House Climate, Energy and Environment Information Session "Electricity 101: The Transmission System and Energy Markets" (Nov. 6, 2023) (accessible here: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/202311/Committees/HCEE/2023-11-06-14-30/MeetingMaterials>).

³ LC 80, *In the Matter of PORTLAND GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY, 2023 Clean Energy Plan and Integrated Resource Plan*, PGE Response to Staff's Round 2 Comments and Recommendations, p.13 (Nov. 21, 2023) (accessible here: <https://edocs.puc.state.or.us/efdocs/HAC/lc80hac154444.pdf>).