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On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3628

In Support of HB 3628 – Oregon Electric Transmission Authority

We are facing a Climate Emergency. There have been good advancements in clean energy production through solar and wind energy capture installations that will help to mitigate a drawdown in fossil fuel use - the primary cause of climate change. However, to efficiently transmit these new electrical energy resources from production sites to homes and businesses across the state, an expanded public planning and regulatory authority is needed.

The Pacific Northwest lacks a Regional Transmission Authority (RTO). The development of a regional authority will require the collaboration of states, federal and private energy producers and transmission operators.

To address this issue within the State of Oregon, HB 3628 would create an Oregon Electric Transmission Authority to assess how to upgrade the electricity transmission system at low cost. The work of an Oregon Electric Transmission Authority would put Oregon in a position to understand and negotiate for the needs of Oregon citizens as a Regional Authority is assembled.

HB 3628 specifies the structure of the new Authority, including its Board of Directors, Staff and Budget. The new Authority would be vested with the power to issue transmission revenue bonds, coordinate the implementation of GETs, streamline siting of new power facilities, and help establish public-private partnerships to enable robust funding.

An Oregon Electric Transmission Authority is needed to catalyze investment and public support for this expansion of electric transmission capacity by financing, developing, constructing, upgrading, owning and operating electric transmission infrastructure that will serve the needs of Oregon citizens into the future.

The authority would identify and establish electric transmission corridors with statewide significance, and utilize low-cost revenue bonds to finance transmission projects that are recovered by collecting payments from the users of the authority's transmission facilities.

In addition, HB 3628 establishes the Tribal Advisory Council on Electric Transmission to ensure equity and environmental concerns are addressed. It requires the authority

to submit an annual report to the Legislative Assembly related to the authority's activities and operations for the preceding year. HB 3628 limits the authority's annual operating budget to no more than \$2 million – funded through a charge from large industrial electricity customers.

As climate change events rapidly increase in intensity, a more robust transmission grid is needed, and planning and resource development must begin now. Oregon citizens deserve more rigorous oversight of just and environmentally sound development of energy transmission infrastructure as clean energy demand drives electrical power production. I urge the committee to support HB 3628 and vote to move this bill forward for approval in this legislative session. Now is the time to be a Climate Hero.