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Testimony regarding HB5006, the Oregon Biennium Budget

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

As I have noted previously, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now is the oldest grassroots climate organization in the Rogue Valley and represents some 2,000 Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and seek federal, state and local action to address it. We are rural and coastal Southern Oregonians who live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought, rising sea level and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to impose on us. Because of our concern, we pay close attention to efforts nationally, statewide, and locally that impact our collective efforts to address the climate crisis. As our logo above indicates, the focus of SOCAN is to promote action through science while encouraging that this be undertaken through a social justice lens.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on our priorities for the forthcoming Biennium Budget. It will surprise no one to learn that SOCAN is strongly committed to supporting budgetary allocations that will lead our state forward in achieving contributions to reducing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases through reducing emissions and promoting carbon sequestration.

For these reasons, we strongly support funding for:

- A well-constructed transportation package that leads us towards reducing the contribution of this sector to our statewide emissions total.
- Promoting energy affordability in an era when our utilities (gas and electricity) have been engaged for several years on a concerted campaign to hike rates.
- Achieving the goal of HB2021: namely 100% clean energy in Oregon.
- Encouraging clean energy technology in the state.
- Promoting incentive programs that allow low-income Oregonians to improve their energy use efficiency by electrifying whenever possible.
- Promoting carbon sequestration through natural climate solutions that encourage sequestration in our natural and working lands with a particular focus on agriculture, forests and wetlands.

- Ensuring that the Climate Protection Program is fully funded, active, and effective.
- Staffing state agencies engaged in climate and environmental protection adequately to allow them to meet their goals.

Specific Bills to which we encourage funding are:

HB3170	Modifies the definitions of and grant requirements for Resilience Hubs and Resilience Networks. <i>Resilience Hubs provide a valuable mechanism for providing service to low-income Oregonians and those who have suffered social injustice in the event of an environmental crisis.</i>
SB83-09	Makes changes related to building code standards for wildfire hazard mitigation. <i>There are few risks confronting Oregonians more critical than wildfires, enhanced by global warming</i>
HB3172	Directs the Department of the State Fire Marshal to establish a grant program to facilitate the retrofitting of dwellings and accessory structures to reduce vulnerability to wildfire. <i>Home hardening and defensible space are mechanisms for reducing wildfire risk but are often expensive and thus discouraging; a grant program to support these activities for low-income Oregonians would be valuable and helpful to those needing funding help.</i>
HB2945	Establishes the state policy on the purchase of new zero-emission school buses. <i>To address our transportation reduction needs and health goals for schoolchildren and low-income communities, all diesel-powered school buses should be replaced with electric buses and school supported financially through the transition.</i>
HB3143	Establishes the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program Subaccount in the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund. <i>The best way to protect and conserve beavers is to provide landowners and managers with tools to allow co-existence.</i>
HB3081-01	Requires the State Department of Energy to coordinate with other organizations, conduct outreach, establish a statewide navigation and support system and provide information in multiple languages, as part of the department's single resource for providing information and assistance related to available energy efficiency incentives and programs. <i>The best way to help Oregonians increase their energy use efficiency is to enhance the one-stop-shop where we can learn about incentives to undertake improvements.</i>
HB3450-01	Directs the State Department of Energy to develop an energy storage transition plan for the critical energy infrastructure hub. <i>The PDX Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub is desperately in need of upgrading to protect Oregonians from the aftermath of a seismic event.</i>
HB2949	Requires the Department of Environmental Quality to contract with a third party to study and assess financial assurance requirements for owners or operators of bulk oils and liquid fuels terminals. <i>Ditto to above.</i>

HB2152	Directs the State Department of Energy to develop and implement a Statewide Geographic Diversity of Fueling Stations for Disaster Reserves Priority Action Plan. <i>Ditto to above.</i>
HB2065-01	Allows a person to contract with a third-party consultant to conduct a study or engineering evaluation that a public utility requires for an application to interconnect a community renewable energy project or microgrid. <i>The Oregon transmission grid is desperately in need of an upgrade to allow the state to undertake the transition to clean renewable energy and to electrify.</i>
HB2066	Directs the Public Utility Commission to establish a regulatory framework to allow the ownership, deployment and use of microgrids and community microgrids. <i>Ditto to above.</i>
HB3546-03	Directs the Public Utilities Commission to provide for a classification of service for large energy use facilities. <i>Oregon's transmission system is threatened by energy-intensive facilities such as data centers; these should be classified and charged additionally for the threat they pose to Oregonians.</i>
HB5039	Appropriates moneys from the General Fund to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for certain biennial expenses. <i>OWEB performs incredibly valuable functions for Oregonians and deserves funding.</i>
HB3580-02	Establishes the Task Force on Eelgrass Resources. Work Session Passed 9:0:0:0 Referred to Ways & Means. <i>Oregon's eelgrass communities play valuable marine wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration roles; they deserve to be conserved.</i>
HB3786-01	Appropriates moneys to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust for deposit in the Oregon Ocean Science Fund for the purpose of providing competitive grants. <i>This trust serves a valuable role in protecting critical marine and estuarine communities, the marine wildlife they support and the carbon sequestration they achieve.</i>
HB3609	Requires each electric company to develop a distributed power plant program for the procurement of grid services to be provided by distributed energy resources. <i>This proposal would contribute to enhancing the transmission grid, an essential undertaking as we transition to renewable energy.</i>
HB3587-03	Directs the Department of Land Conservation and Development to take certain actions related to rocky habitat management. <i>Our rocky seashore habitats are critical components of the marine system that deserve to be conserved.</i>
SB85-02	Directs the State Fire Marshal to establish a neighborhood protection cooperative grant program. <i>Assisting neighborhoods to develop protection programs can reduce wildfire risk for all Oregonians.</i>
SB5520	Appropriates moneys from the General Fund to the Department of Environmental Quality for certain biennial expenses. <i>During a time when Oregon's cherished environment is under threat from a federal government that prizes extraction,</i>

	<i>destruction and short-term profit over sustainability and climate protection, we need an active Department of Environmental Quality to protect Oregon's environmental health and continue to drive greenhouse gas emissions reductions.</i>
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Specific Bills that we encourage receive no funding are:

HB 2038 - 03	Requires the State Department of Energy to study nuclear energy, including nuclear waste disposal from nuclear energy. <i>Nuclear energy has been studied substantially; it is worthless to impose on Oregon taxpayers the cost of yet another study</i>
HB2410	Allows the Energy Facility Siting Council to issue a site certificate for a small modular reactor energy facility demonstration project in Umatilla County. <i>We find it particularly inappropriate that the taxpayers of the state should be charged for a referendum in one county that would undermine a state statute and result in threats to all Oregonians.</i>
HB3103-03	Directs the State Forester to establish sustainable harvest levels for harvesting timber on state forestland and develop a timber inventory model to inform estuarine sustainable harvest levels. <i>This represents a very thinly veiled attempt to make Oregon's forests serve no other purpose than provide timber; all other societal values are negated.</i>

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now urges the legislature to fund the actions and bills we endorse and not fund those we oppose.

Respectfully Submitted



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