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SOCAN Comments supporting SB1597

Chair Sollman and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment:

I write as cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN), the oldest grassroots climate organization in the Rogue Valley representing 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.

I write today to support SB1597 requiring that utilities inform ratepayers on the cost of waste storage

ODOE (undated) reported that “the average retail price of electricity in Oregon increased from 9.03 cents per kilowatt hour in January 2020 to 11.40 cents/kWh in January 2024, a 26% increase over four years.” The same report suggested that the Northwest Regional Forecast indicated electricity demand will grow by over 30% in the next ten years, presumably inducing further rate increases.

Although currently, nuclear electricity generating plants are not permitted in Oregon (e.g., Sierra 2024), efforts continue to undermine that restriction. This is unfortunate for reasons discussed elsewhere (Journet 2025 and in testimony this session on HB4046. Journet 2026). One of the major drawbacks to the nuclear option is the large cost of nuclear electrical generation. For example, considering the levelized cost of energy Forbes US (2025) indicated that the cost of advanced nuclear power was estimated at \$110/MWh with a forecast to remain that through 2050. Meanwhile, Photovoltaic solar was estimated at \$55/MWh and declining, with onshore wind at \$40/MWh declining to \$35/MWh in 2050.

One of the contributors to the aforementioned nuclear expense is the cost of storing nuclear waste. Cranmer (2024) pointed out that the cost of interim storage of nuclear waste comprises

construction of a storage facility at \$14 million with a further \$1 million monitoring cost annually, both costs exist regardless of the amount of fuel stored. Should there ever be a time when nuclear electrical generation is permitted in Oregon, it would be preferable to have in the statutes the requirement that utilities inform ratepayers of these costs.

For this reason, SOCAN supports SB1597

Respectfully Submitted



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