

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301



February 5, 2025

From: *Community Renewable Energy Association - CREA*
Subject: *Testimony in support of HB 4031*

The Community Renewable Energy Association (CREA) appreciates this opportunity to testify in support of HB 4031, to temporarily provide siting streamlining for renewable energy projects that qualify for the expiring Federal tax credits.

CREA is an ORS 190 intergovernmental association. Members include counties, irrigation districts, councils of government, project developers, for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations. CREA supports business and local economic opportunities through renewable energy development in a competitive environment.

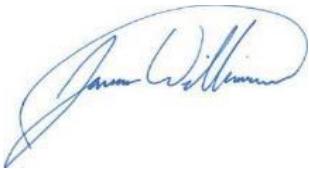
HB 4031 addresses an urgent challenge facing solar energy developers in Oregon today. Recent federal action has significantly shortened the timeline to qualify for wind and solar tax credits, requiring projects to begin construction by July 2026 and be energized within four years. Permitting alone can take years, making this timeline difficult, and in many cases unworkable, to achieve.

HB 4031 offers a practical, temporary solution by allowing qualifying projects to pursue county-level permitting instead of Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) certification. County processes are rigorous, preserve environmental protections and public participation, and typically take 3–12 months. CREA supports HB 4031 because participation is optional for counties, allowing them to choose whether they want to permit these projects. Eligibility, under the bill, is narrowly defined to ensure only projects capable of meeting federal deadlines can qualify.

Enabling these projects to move forward will be beneficial to Oregon. Renewable energy projects are among the largest property taxpayers in rural counties, create well-paying construction jobs, and generate substantial local economic activity. They also help utilities meet clean energy requirements at a time of rapidly growing electricity demand. Securing federal tax credits reduces project costs by roughly 30–40 percent, a significant savings that directly benefits Oregon ratepayers through lower electricity prices.

HB 4031 is a limited, time-bound tool that preserves local control and existing standards while helping ensure Oregon does not lose critical in-state generation, economic opportunity, and long-term affordability. We respectfully urge the committee to support HB 4031. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Williams".

James Williams
CREA Executive Director