

Submitter: John Perona
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1526

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for SB1526. I write in SUPPORT of the bill.

I am Professor (emeritus) of Chemistry at Portland State University and author of the climate change science/policy text for laypersons titled From Knowledge to Power, which has been widely circulated in Oregon.

This bill is important because it executes key preliminary steps towards the establishment of a bona fide green bank in Oregon, which would finance clean energy, resilience and emissions reductions projects initiated in the private sector. Ultimately, public capital would be used to leverage private investment, sharing the risk of bringing new green enterprises and technologies to fruition.

The bill is particularly important now for two reasons: (1) the federal government is sharply pulling back its commitment to funding green energy technology; (2) Governor Kotek is explicitly seeking to rehabilitate Oregon's image as a "business unfriendly" state.

The design of the bill is clever. In recognition of the budget shortfall it commits no funds now, but rather assigns DOE the task of first acquiring startup monies for the bank from an existing state fund (not the general fund), and then using those monies to assemble a founding board that would create the new institution - essentially a nascent green bank that can receive private or public funds with the intention of ultimately using those monies to finance projects with an emphasis on underserved communities. If this much success can be achieved, presumably a succeeding bill will actually authorize the new bank to lend or securitize green energy projects in the state.

It would, of course, be better if we could begin by explicitly capitalizing the new institution, but a meaningful start along these lines would likely require on the order of tens of millions of dollars. Lacking this capacity, the Senate Energy committee is doing what it can. They are to be applauded for this effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB 1526.