April 21, 2015

To: Chair Vega Pederson and Members of the House Committee on Energy

From: Joe Esmonde, IBEW Local 48
          Robert Westerman, IBEW Local 932

 IBEW Local 48 and IBEW Local 932 Support HB 2216 for Oregon jobs and economic development

Oregon needs jobs. In our rural communities especially, our unemployment rate is still far too high. In Coos Bay, the unemployment rate is nearly 3 points higher than the national average and the community continues to lose jobs.

Together, IBEW Local 48 and IBEW Local 932 represent over 4,500 members working throughout Oregon and on the Central Coast. Our members all earn a living wage, with healthcare and good benefits. Their earnings support not only our members and their families and the communities we live in. Local, good-paying jobs are the key to a healthy economy and community. This is why, on behalf of our members and Oregon communities, we write today in support of HB 2216-3.

The Windfloat Pacific offshore wind pilot project will create hundreds of new jobs around the state and in the rural coastal communities that need jobs most. Developers have committed to placing a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) for the project, ensuring that these good-paying jobs stay local and support our communities.

By siting their pilot project in Oregon, developers are investing in big economic opportunities for our state. The project will establish Oregon as a leader in this growing multi-billion dollars clean energy industry by spurring additional investments in local job training, assembly facilities, and research while establishing the port facilities, supply chain, and skilled labor force needed to develop floating offshore wind farms throughout the Pacific. As the industry grows, Oregon will be positioned to maximize our economic opportunities and continue building out jobs.

Oregon should seize the opportunity to be the hub of this emerging industry and create thousands of jobs. On behalf of our members, our communities, and Oregon's economy, we encourage you to pass HB 2216-3.