



Date: March 9, 2021
To: House Committee on Water
Re: Support for HB 3221

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Owens, Vice Chair Reardon, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), representing Oregon's 36 county governments I am writing you today to urge your support of HB 3221, legislation that could help Oregon's counties achieve clean energy and resilience goals.

Many of Oregon's counties have passed resolutions championing increased renewable energy generation to minimize climate change impacts. Right now, these communities have limited options to realize their renewable energy goals. HB 3221 would give Oregon's local governments a pathway to work with their existing utility to support of their community's energy priorities.

Oregon's 36 county governments face complex tasks and varying demands of growing communities, differing economic drivers, diverse populations and regional needs and goals. HB 3221 would create a flexible, voluntary program to enable an interested county to set up a renewable energy mix that best serves their unique local needs.

There are many barriers to the development of local, small-scale renewable energy projects, including low available power rates for electricity sold on the wholesale markets and high costs of interconnecting to the utility grid. HB 3221 would create a green tariff program for Oregon's counties to achieve their clean energy goals and give local renewable energy developers a path to making clean energy projects viable. Local projects can deliver many important benefits to the communities in our state jobs, environmental improvements, energy resilience through backup power and more.

HB 3221 would provide many essential benefits to the residents and businesses in Oregon's counties, including affordable electricity rates, local energy and economic development, and increased resilience of the electricity service to extreme events, all while retaining our existing relationships with Oregon's investor-owned utilities.

We respectfully request your support of HB 3221.

Sincerely,

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