

March 21, 2021

To: House Committee On Energy and Environment

Re: Oregon House Bill 2021

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and other Members of the House Committee On Energy and Environment,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2021, 100% Clean Energy for All. My name is Richard Warren Scott, I live in Union County, and I am a progressive Eastern Oregonian. I was born and raised in La Grande, graduated from La Grande High School, and received a BA from Eastern Oregon University. I am writing to you today to voice my strong support of House Bill 2021.

I urge you to support House Bill 2021 so that all communities in Oregon benefit from the necessary transition to clean energy. House Bill 2021 can help us to ensure that communities like La Grande can build local and resilient energy systems while tackling our high unemployment rate. According to a March 10, 2021 article in The Observer, Union County has the highest unemployment rate in Eastern Oregon at 7.8%. The paucity of good paying jobs is one reason graduates like myself are forced to leave La Grande in search of a living wage. This damages our communities and promotes rural-to-urban brain drain and often drives us to pursue employment outside of Oregon, thus decreasing our state's tax revenue.

With your support for the 100% Clean Energy For All bill, we can build a strong, resilient, and clean energy economy in our communities by ensuring that Oregon's 100% Clean Energy Standard includes strong labor standards that ensure clean energy projects hire locally, pay the prevailing wage, provide good benefits necessary for a high quality of life, and reserve opportunities for apprenticeships. It is also imperative that this bill creates strong incentives for community-based energy projects, in addition to provisions that prioritize frontline rural communities such as La Grande.

Imagine a world where rural Oregonians don't have to uproot their lives and leave the state in order to pursue fair and ethical employment. A world where life in rural Oregon doesn't necessitate participation in extractive industries that worsen the climate crisis. A world where community members know exactly where their energy comes from and can take pride in the labor they contributed to building local energy resiliency. I thank you for your time and hope you will support House Bill 2021 for a strong rural Oregon.

Sincerely,

Richard Warren Scott, La Grande