

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Helm and Brock Smith, and Members of the House Committee on Energy & Environment:

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Families for Climate. Our group organizes families, parents, and kids to take action for climate justice, and a livable future for all. It is imperative that we quickly and dramatically reduce the greenhouse gas pollution that is driving the climate crisis. If your bathtub is overflowing, the obvious thing to do is immediately turn off the tap!

The electricity sector is currently the second-biggest contributor to U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. A Clean Energy Standard is, therefore, mission critical for solving the climate crisis. Scientists and policy experts agree that we need to “electrify everything,” increasingly powering huge portions of our economy with electricity — transportation, our homes, even heavy industry. But that plan only works if we power it all with clean electricity and not fossil fuels.

Members of our policy team are involved with monitoring the ongoing rule-making and implementation of Governor Brown's Executive Order on Climate (EO 20-04), and we are distressed and angered by DEQ's refusal to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels for electricity. DEQ's own data shows that emissions from the electric sector—fracked gas power plants, specifically—are the leading greenhouse gas polluters in Oregon by orders of magnitude. We are deeply worried that without meaningful legislation to guide the way, DEQ and the other 15 state agencies with EO 20-04 mandates will not take action urgently enough to meet Oregon's GHG emission reduction goals on the necessary timeline.

As a sobering reminder, Oregon has already missed its statutory 2020 GHG reduction goal, having not adopted critical recommendations from the Global Warming Commission's legislative reports dated 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018 and now 2020.

Thus, we strongly believe that to reduce climate change impacts, Oregon needs BOTH a 100% clean energy standard AND effective GHG regulations.

We are in support of HB 2021-1; however, the bill should include needed amendments. Below are some of the ones we believe are critically important (with thanks to the more exhaustive testimony provided by Climate Solutions):

- In Section 3: Clarify that 100% emissions-free electricity is **required** by 2040 by removing the “seeks to” modifier. This section can reference the section numbers of the many reasonable offramps for reliability, resource adequacy, cost cap, etc., in the bill that qualify this mandate, but it should still be a mandate and not merely something utilities are “striving toward” as an unenforceable goal. These changes provide clear direction for energy providers as well as the investment community and enhances the environmental integrity of the bill.
- Section 3: Direct energy providers to make continual progress towards the 2030 goal in the lead-up to that clean energy target. This will ensure near-term actions across a variety of options, including energy efficiency, renewable energy projects, demand response, and non-emitting storage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions sooner.
- Section 4: Ensure that clean energy plans include targets for renewable energy and short- and long-term non-emitting storage as well as the other resources listed.
- Section 30: 30(1): Amend to apply to substantive expansion of gas plants with existing site certificates **in addition** to no new gas power plants built in Oregon.

In addition to the pandemic and the economic crisis it has caused, rural and urban communities in Oregon are also suffering from the economic and health impacts of the climate crisis, through wildfires, smoke pollution, drought and extreme weather events and this will only worsen in the future. But cleaning up our electricity system is not just a climate imperative—it will provide an opportunity to recharge our economy and create millions of good-paying jobs. It is also an opportunity to address ongoing injustices, by transitioning away from polluting fossil fuel infrastructure that's poisoning our communities. HB 2021 can help us to build a strong, resilient, and clean energy economy that will directly benefit many of our most impacted communities, but only if the law includes:

- Strong labor standards that ensure clean energy projects hire local, pay the prevailing wage and provide good benefits, and reserve opportunities for apprenticeships.
- Good incentives for community-based energy projects such as solar plus storage that increase energy independence, affordability, and disaster-resilience.
- Provisions that prioritize benefits and avoid harms to environmental justice communities including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), low-income communities, Tribes, and rural and coastal communities.

These elements are deeply important, because as Bill McKibben says, **"The battle is not just to swap out coal for sun; it's to swap out a poisoned and unfair world for one that works for everyone, now and in the future."** To do the former without achieving the later is a kind of eco-fascism.

Many in our group became involved in climate action when we became parents, and were forced to more fully confront the catastrophe looming ever closer and larger over our children's future. Everyone, everywhere, across the political spectrum, agrees that children are our most precious gift. In this perilous moment, we must come together to preserve a future planet where they can not merely survive, but thrive.

Nora Lehmann, Co-President of the Board, Families for Climate