



NW Energy Coalition
for a clean and affordable energy future

**Testimony in Support of
HB 2021
in front of the House Committee on
Energy & Environment
5 April 2021**

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, Vice-Chair Helm and members of the committee:

My name is Jeff Bissonnette and I am testifying today on behalf of the NW Energy Coalition in support of HB 2021. The Coalition is the region's broadest alliance of utilities, businesses, advocates, and communities who are interested in advancing clean, reliable, affordable, equitable energy policy across the Pacific Northwest.

My comments today will focus on the -5 amendments for the bill, dated today, 5 April 2021.

The coalition fully supports a 100% Clean Electricity Standard. There has been some debate over whether that standard should be procurement based, like Oregon's existing Renewable Energy Standard, or emissions based, like HB 2021 proposes in its -5 amendments. The coalition believes both approaches are workable and can provide the basis for getting Oregon to a 100% Clean energy system.

However, since the HB 2021 and its -5 amendments take an emissions approach, and since that approach has received a much more thorough discussion this session, my comments will focus on that emissions-based approach and I will discuss the procurement-based approach when the committee hears the next bill.

The discussions around a 100% Clean Electricity bill have been very productive and have brought us to a bill that has achieved a broad consensus.

Let me cover where negotiations have resulted in changes since the bill's last hearing that have earned our support for HB 2021.

The Language Setting the Standard is Clear. The bill is very clear in setting an end requirement of 100% emissions reductions by 2040 with equally clear interim targets in 2030 and 2035. We were looking for a very clear outline of what is expected and the negotiated amendments provide that.

Of course, there is operational language that provides flexibility in navigating short-term exceptions that might arise in implementing the standard and that is appropriate. But there is now no question of the standard that will be guiding actions going forward.

The Standard is Technology-Neutral. The definition of non-emitting resources does not favor any one technology over another. This is appropriate and preferred. Most importantly, it provides a clear role for energy efficiency to be used in conjunction with other non-emitting generating resources. We favor that approach and are gratified to see it in the bill.

Development of Clean Energy Plans. We are pleased with the end result of the negotiations around the development of clean energy plans the utilities will be required to undertake to demonstrate how they are moving forward toward the final standard of 100% emissions reduction by 2040. Again, current statutory requirements for energy efficiency and demand response are expressly called out and the bill acknowledges the possibility that more may be needed. These plans will prove to be a useful tool for regulators and stakeholders to review and debate to help utilities take the most efficient, cost-effective path to the 100% standard.

Establishes Utility-Community Benefits and Impacts Advisory Groups. It will be important to continually monitor the direct benefits and impacts on a broad range of affected customers and communities as we progress to a 100% Clean electricity system. The bill recognizes this need by requiring utilities to establish advisory groups that made up of representatives of low-income organizations, environmental justice communities and other impacted stakeholders that will help the utility create and submit biennial reports to the Public Utility Commission providing assessments of energy burden, service disconnections, opportunities to improve resilience in historically-underserved communities in a utility's service territory, among other topics. This is a welcome institutional addition that will help all stakeholders consider ongoing impacts to all utility customers.

Inclusion of Labor Standards. We are very pleased to see that labor interests, working with utilities and developers, were able to develop standards that were acceptable to all parties. This has been an issue that several bills being considered this session have included and we are glad to see those discussions come to fruition here.

Once again, let me express our gratitude to all the stakeholders who came together over many months to arrive at the balanced bill that you have before you today. We are happy to support HB 2021 as a well-considered policy to establish a 100% Clean Electricity standard for Oregon.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2021. I'm happy to answer questions.