

April 5, 2021

House Bill 2021



IBEW 48
IBEW 89
IBEW 112
IBEW 125
IBEW 280
IBEW 659
IBEW 932

**Oregon State Association
of Electrical Workers**

Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment;

The Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers (OSAEW) represents all IBEW Local Unions and their 10,000+ members engaged in all aspects of the Energy Sector, from generation of electrical energy to the transmission, distribution and utilization of that energy. Our members are the skilled tradespeople that build, maintain, and operate Energy systems.

The OSAEW welcomes the opportunity to discuss the inclusion of labor standards in the 100% Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) bills being considered as it directly impacts our livelihoods, quality of life, and careers. We support the growing consensus that labor standards are critically important in any climate policy, including HB 2021, HB 3180, and SB 784. In any of these types of policies we encourage stronger labor standards be incorporated.

Labor Standards in the green energy sector should be meaningful for Oregon's workforce. As we continue to move towards further green energy development, we must ensure that our workforce is protected and the Oregon construction industry is not left behind, or supplanted by less skilled out-of-state workers, due to a lack of standards.

In the development of any policy looking at carbon reduction and green energy, the OSAEW believes certain minimum standards must be upheld to further the development of our economies and workforce alongside our green energy infrastructure. These include, but are not limited to:

Area Standard Wage Rates for renewable energy projects: As projects are built across the state, we must apply area wage standards for the workforce in the region. Area wage standards should include the wages and fringe benefits for workers in a given occupation in this industry and be based on the existing area wages determined by Prevailing Wage under ORS 279C. These wages create a level playing field for Oregon contractors bidding work on green energy projects and promote living wages for working men and women in these critical infrastructure careers.

The threshold for applying these wages should reflect the wide array of projects being built. We believe that as new green energy investments are made, and facilities are planned and constructed, any facility of 50 kw or higher should be built paying workers the area standard wage. As we see construction of facilities in Oregon of many sizes, we must ensure that our energy infrastructure at all levels is constructed and maintained with high labor and contractor standards upheld.

Apprenticeship Utilization: All contractors and subcontractors on renewable energy projects should be registered training agents with the appropriate Oregon State registered trade apprenticeship programs. An aspirational goal of 15% apprenticeship utilization on projects should be included.

Women/Minority Individuals & Veterans: An aspirational goal of 15% of total work hours to be performed by individuals from one or more of these groups will help create equity in career opportunities in this industry.

Licensing: We must uphold Oregon's licensing standards for work on these projects. Licensing and the enforcement and compliance of that licensing should be included for all licensed trades in Oregon.

Family Health Care and Retirement: These benefits should be provided by all contractors and subcontractors to their workers on renewable energy projects. The work that our members perform over their lifetimes is dangerous and ultimately potentially debilitating. Full family health care and retirement are necessary for workers in these sectors to ensure that they are not simply used up and thrown away at the ends of their careers.

Responsible Contractor Requirements: Contractors and subcontractors should have a history of compliance with all laws, rules and requirements regarding workers compensation, building codes, OSHA and Wage and Hour. Contractors must be licensed and in good standing, and not ineligible to receive a contract or subcontract for public works.

Project Labor Agreements: Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) are a valuable tool to ensure that not only are the appropriate prevailing wages paid, but that the conditions under which the work is performed is equitable. They also ensure an equitable distribution of work amongst the various trades. PLAs allow all contractors and subcontractors the ability to bid and secure the work, while maintaining the industry negotiated wages, benefits, and conditions of the work to be performed. The OSAEW also recognizes that a threshold for inclusion of PLA's is appropriate and believes that a target of \$1,000,000 should be the floor for such.

The OSAEW looks forward to being an active partner in the continued development of Oregon's green energy infrastructure, and we strongly urge you to include the necessary standards for workers and contractors on these projects.

Sincerely,

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