



14 May 2021

To: House Committee on Revenue

**RE: Support for Oregon House Bill 2021-A -A46**

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Reschke, and members of the committee,

Guided by the values and expertise of medicine and public health, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival. We are an organization of over 2,800 health professionals and public health advocates statewide working collaboratively with community partners to educate and advocate for societal and policy change that protects human health at the local, state, national, and international level. We seek a healthy, just, and peaceful world for present and future generations.

Oregon PSR supports House Bill 2021-A with the -A46 amendments, and additional changes to ensure Tribal consultation before building clean energy and energy storage projects. With these additions, we are confident that 100% Clean Energy for All is ready to go and should be moved forward. In addition to ensuring that Oregon charts a course to a fully emissions-free electricity grid, this bill will create significant co-benefits to public health. It is increasingly clear that the time to pass this framework for clean energy and a substantial investment in community-based energy projects is now.

HB 2021 A is straightforward, well-constructed, and wisely focused on reducing the biggest greenhouse gas emissions from our electricity sector while setting a cost cap on investor-owned utilities to ensure that Oregon ratepayers are not unfairly footing the bill. Comprehensive labor standards and environmental justice protections and co-benefits for rural, coastal, low-income, and BIPOC communities mean that this bill will move our electricity sector in a direction that supports Oregon workers, minimizes harms to communities that have historically borne the burdens of our energy systems, and ensures that no one is left behind from the opportunities of the clean energy workforce. All of this together is good news for our state's social determinants of health, and demonstrates that this policy is a new chapter for Oregon, representing our own innovative and comprehensive pathway to a clean energy future.

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As renewable energy gets cheaper and disasters become more frequent and more extreme, it has never been more important to invest in small, locally-owned renewable power systems that support energy resilience and independence. That is why we are glad to see a \$50 million investment in local and Tribal governments to work in partnership with nonprofits and private entities to build community-based renewable energy projects with priority given to the regions and communities of the state that need these projects and their accompanying economic and health benefits the most (namely, rural and low-income communities, BIPOC, people with disabilities, and people living in particularly disaster-prone regions). These dollars will net the state of Oregon a huge benefit in the form of improved health outcomes and avoided health care costs as communities enjoy uninterrupted connection to electricity during natural disasters and lower energy bills that mean more money for groceries, medical care, and other essential needs.

**We need to act this year to put this policy into motion** so that we can begin to see the co-benefits to public health that come from more living-wage jobs, investments in community-based energy projects, and an end to the pollution that comes from burning fossil fuels like fracked methane gas for Oregon's electricity. And it is worth noting that nothing precludes us from doing more after this session to invest even more in life-changing community-based energy projects--we absolutely can and should do more in the coming years. But the time to get started is now: we have never seen a policy like this in Oregon, and it is poised to raise the bar on how a clean energy standard can yield meaningful benefits for workers and communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill. Please support House Bill 2021-A with the -A46 amendments and improvements to Tribal consultation.

Sincerely,



Damon Motz-Storey, Healthy Climate Program Director  
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility

