

Good afternoon, Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Findley and Members of the Committee,

My name is Andrew Beyer and I am the CEO of EC Electric. We have 750 union electricians that work across the entire state of Oregon, from Tillamook to Boardman, Klamath Falls to Astoria. We work on a wide range of projects, from large scale industrial and commercial projects like Data Centers and utility-scale solar panel installations to small service calls for schools and small businesses. We have been a key partner to the Energy Trust for energy upgrades for many years.

We are members of NECA, AGC and an initial member of Oregon Business for Climate. Today I am speaking on behalf of NECA and EC's 1,000 employees. We support statewide improvements to codes related to building energy efficiency and reducing our statewide carbon footprint. However, this REACH Code proposal, SB 1518, is NOT the way to do that and I am testifying in opposition.

Allowing local jurisdictions to ADOPT building codes, as enabled in this legislation is a REALLY BAD IDEA and sets a truly unfortunate precedent to do so. If the state wants to improve our already robust energy codes, then we should do it on a state-wide basis, not piece-meal. Why?

First, I have tremendous respect for local building officials. They do a great job across our state. However, they are NOT qualified nor trained to assess the complex implications of changing components of inter-related building systems. Unanticipated consequences will be inevitable, and not for the first time. When the state moved to require interior vapor-barriers to reduce air leaks in buildings, that DID reduce energy usage, but also ended up trapping water inside walls, leading to mold, rot and hundreds of millions of dollars of damage to wood frame homes and commercial buildings in Oregon.

Second, training electricians and field crews on building codes is a task we take very seriously. Public safety and worker safety is the foundation of that. Contrary to Sen Beyer's testimony, training them to perform work differently in Portland than in Oregon City or Klamath Falls, with ever-changing rules, is nothing short of impossible, even though we have REALLY GOOD training programs in place in partnership with the IBEW.

Third, there are many great energy-saving technologies emerging. Every one of them should be tested and vetted by professional, thorough engineering review, not by building officials, to assure that they are safe and enduring improvements. Some have been, others haven't. We shouldn't bastardize the code with risks of uncertain gains and long-term risks. We should set STATEWIDE REQUIRED CODES.

Finally, our time, effort and state dollars should focus on state-wide code improvements, with added emphasis on upgrading the existing building stock because that's where 95% of the waste is occurring. Upgrade existing buildings AND NEW BUILDINGS, but don't compromise our codes. The statewide building code system works really well, so please don't screw it up.

Thank you.

*Quote from the testimony invitation, bill explanation: "Permits municipality to adopt Reach Code and require adherence to code as minimum construction standard and method within municipality's jurisdiction notwithstanding requirement that state building code be uniform and applicable to all municipalities in state. Provides that municipality's adoption of Reach Code is not amendment to state building code and does not require approval of director. Provides that municipality that does not adopt Reach Code does not need to enforce Reach Code within municipality's jurisdiction."*