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February 13, 2023

To: Rep. Pam Marsh, Chair, and Members  
House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment

From: Mary Kyle McCurdy, Deputy Director

Re: HB 2534, -1: State Energy Policy

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 2534, including the -1 amendment. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

1000 Friends supports HB 2534, with the -1 amendment. This bill directs the Department of Energy to develop a comprehensive state energy strategy that identifies pathways to achieving the state's energy policy objectives. The strategy must take into account: state energy demand and trends; energy resources; costs, energy efficiency, feasibility and availability; land use considerations; natural resource impacts; economic and employment impacts; energy burden and affordability; energy resilience; environmental justice; emerging technologies; generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure needs; existing and potential incentives to support energy efficiency; community benefits; and community energy. The Department of Energy would deliver the resulting report and recommendations to the Legislature by November 2025.

1000 Friends is and has been engaged in conversations, in and out of the legislative process, about how to integrate renewable energy needs with those of agriculture, natural resources, ranching, forestry, coastal resources, and communities. The lack of a state level energy plan, which integrates not only projected energy needs and over what time period, but also transmission capacity and location; generation and distribution systems; the relationship of Oregon's energy use and generation with those of other western states; the sources of Oregon's current and future energy; and more, is a significant hindrance to the success of those conversations. With stakeholders ranging from highly localized community interests to multistate businesses and utilities, from the Oregon pronghorn to private energy developers, from highly productive farms and ranches to those facing water uncertainty, the current situation creates confusion and uncertainty.

This comprehensive state energy assessment and strategy should set the stage for a more coordinated, public-oriented system of generation and transmission.