



www.RogueClimate.org || PO Box 1980, Phoenix, OR 97535 || 541-301-9204

February 22, 2023

To: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

From: Rogue Climate

Re: Support for SB 852

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, Senator Jeff Golden, Senator Cedric Hayden, Senator Kate Lieber,

Rogue Climate supports SB 852, the “Community Navigator for Energy” bill, introduced by the Oregon Department of Energy to fill in a much needed gap between community groups and access to imperative funding and technical assistance. Rogue Climate is a climate justice organization with offices in Phoenix and Coos Bay, Oregon with a mission to empower Southern Oregon & South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, seniors, and communities of color.

The Oregon Department of Energy has various programs that are geared to provide funds and resources to environmental justice communities, including the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program (CREP). These programs will only be successful if those same communities get the support they need to successfully apply and fulfill their projects.

Working in rural communities, we know how important it is to transition to clean energy and greater energy efficiency, but too often, the communities that would most benefit from these programs are over capacity and don't have the resources or time to navigate complex state or federal energy programs. In my experience serving on the CREP advisory committee, I saw organizations serving low income, rural, Tribal, and communities of color that would have loved to take advantage of the grant program and had projects in mind but with fast deadline turnarounds, extensive information needed to apply, and the lack of technical assistance, it was just not reasonable for them to put effort into starting the process. These community based organizations are the exact ones who should be benefiting from funding that is directed to serve environmental justice communities.

Having that interpersonal, one on one assistance and guidance is crucial to navigating complex systems and generates trust between agencies and communities they serve. We ask you to vote Yes on SB 852.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alessandra de la Torre

Advocacy and Programs Director, Rogue Climate

Community Renewable Energy Grant Program Advisory Committee Member, Rogue Climate