



March 3, 2023

To: Senator Michael Dembrow, Co-Chair, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Representative Khanh Pham, Co-Chair, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Members, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Diane Brandt, Oregon State Director, Renewable Northwest

Re: **HB5016: Support of ODOE Budget**

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Dembrow and Representative Pham, and Members of the Committee:

Renewable Northwest (“RNW”) is a regional, non-profit renewable energy advocacy organization based in Oregon, dedicated to decarbonizing the region by accelerating the transition to renewable electricity. Our members are a combination of renewable energy businesses and environmental and consumer groups. **Renewable Northwest fully supports HB 5016 which provides biennial funding for the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE).**

ODOE is the state’s lead agency on a myriad of energy issues in Oregon - serving as a central resource for information, incentives, and more. RNW sees the proposed budget as fully in line with supporting the agency’s core functions and assisting the state and Oregonians in navigating the energy transition. RNW is a member of the Energy Advisory Working Group (EAWG) which advised the Department on its budget proposal and appreciates ODOE’s consultation with EAWG members throughout this process.

We especially appreciate the Department’s forward thinking in proposing an **energy research fund**. The amount of research tasked to the Department has steadily increased in recent years, and the studies it conducts are aimed to answer and understand important questions facing the state’s energy future - such as the recent studies on Hydrogen, Floating Offshore Wind, Regional Transmission Organizations, Small-Scale Renewables, and others. Giving ODOE the ability to continue this by offering funds for this is strategic. Equally, allowing these funds to be used for consultants for limited, in-depth research where it would cost much more to do “in-house” is a strategic and economic use of state resources.

The request for authorization of **two positions at the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC)** staff is equally strategic and proactive. We anticipate an increase in applications for renewable energy projects going to EFSC in the coming years and having the ability to fill needed positions without waiting for a budget cycle is prudent and offers flexibility. Authorizing these to-be-filled-if-needed positions is a reasonable and pragmatic way to prepare for an unknown number of future applications.

We would also like to call out the request for a **community engagement specialist**. So many of the studies and incentives that ODOE is tasked with running or facilitating rely on a solid community engagement process. Having dedicated staff for this work is essential. Given the amount of potential incentives heading to Oregon and Oregonians through recent federal legislation, we see having staff that can assist in ensuring communities understand these benefits as key for maximizing the benefit of these incentives for all Oregonians.

Again, we **fully support the proposed ODOE budget and the passage of HB 5016.**

We look forward to any future conversations on this topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Brandt', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Diane Brandt  
Renewable Northwest