



March 29, 2023

To: Senator Aaron Woods, Co-Chair, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Members, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
From: Diane Brandt, Oregon State Director, Renewable Northwest
Re: **SB 5534: Support for PUC Budget**

Dear Co-Chairs Wood and Gomberg, 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 supports SB 5534, which would provide biennial funding for the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) and support robust staffing and the ability to engage consultants as needed to perform the Commission’s important work.**

The PUC is an integral agency for the state’s energy landscape and future. In the electric utility space, the PUC is managing an increasingly complex portfolio of issues as the state and region transition to renewable energy. The PUC is still in the midst of implementing HB2021 (2021) - a transformational policy not only mandating the type of electricity that the two largest investor owned utilities use to serve Oregonians (non emitting), but also adding considerations for communities, resiliency, and other factors that have not traditionally featured in electric utility regulation. PUC staff is leading the implementation of this complex, future-oriented policy. The proposed budget includes making those staff positions working on HB2021 implementation permanent - this is essential for continued progress.

The proposed budget from the agency features Policy Option Packages (POPs) that would strengthen the PUC’s ability to attract and retain skilled staff and to engage technical consultants when needed, especially as outlined in POPs 101, 102, and 103. RNW fully supports these resource requests - PUC staff are central to the state’s thoughtful energy transition that fully considers the nuances of the state’s energy policies and changes in renewable energy technology. As mentioned above, the breadth and complexity of issues under consideration at the PUC are only increasing, and resourcing the agency to continue this work is essential.

We fully support the Oregon Public Utility Commission’s budget request as outlined in SB 5534 which we see as important to continue the Commission’s work in managing an increasingly complex set of issues and analysis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane Brandt", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Diane Brandt
Renewable Northwest