

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

LOCAL UNION NO. 932

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February 6, 2024

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa and members of the committee,

My name is Robert Westerman and I have been elected by my peers to the position of Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 932 with jurisdiction on the central and southern Oregon Coast. I have served in this capacity since 1999 and have also had the privilege of serving as Chair of our Pacific Inside JATC, a registered apprenticeship program for electricians that prides itself on training people from our communities to become journey level licensed electricians.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 4080. I strongly encourage your support of HB 4080 and the -1 amendment to establish strong Offshore Wind labor standards and to fund a roadmap that will give our coastal communities the chance to give input and receive much needed information on the potential impacts of these projects. The bill helps ensure that the state does everything we can to align these potential projects with the Oregon values of strong labor standards and robust community outreach and involvement.

If and when Offshore Wind development comes to the Oregon Coast, the possible benefits will only be realized if Oregon takes action to ensure that we maximize the benefits for the communities on the Oregon Coast and throughout Oregon. This bill will give guidance to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to establish strong labor standards in any lease off the Oregon Coast.

These labor standards will ensure that apprenticeship opportunities in construction will be afforded to our communities with a focus on those communities that are currently under represented in the construction industry. The one limiting factor for apprenticeship programs like mine is the amount of work that we have available. The development of Off Shore Wind and the associated domestic supply chain will create additional apprenticeship opportunities for many of the construction trades apprenticeship programs.

Apprenticeship programs utilized need to be bona fide programs registered with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, have approved standards and qualified training agents to employ those apprentices while receiving their OJT hours.

My apprenticeship program, like most of the union trades programs, is industry funded. We do not rely on taxpayer dollars to operate our program. We have the capacity to greatly increase the amount of apprentices employed on the Oregon Coast and the facilities, instructors, and curricula to do so.

HB 4080 will ensure the jobs created will be high road and career pathways to the middle class.

I also welcome the establishment of an Oregon road map for future offshore wind projects. This will ensure that impacted industries and communities have a voice in the process and ensure that their concerns are heard and if possible, mitigated.

Many of us from the coast have been working on just what a road map may look like and how best to address the issue of ensuring that our brothers and sisters on the Oregon Coast have a voice in the process and their concerns addressed.

I would like to close my comments with a couple of observations.

The demand for electricity continues to grow. The retirement of fossil fuel generation, the electrification of homes and the transportation sector will continue to drive that demand. A demand that must be met to ensure safety of life and property as well as fuel our economy.

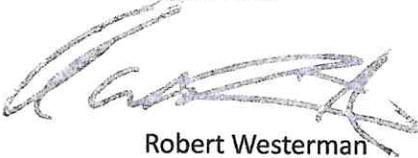
The waters off the southern Oregon Coast are described as the 'Saudi Arabia' of wind resources. The high sustained winds will provide greater efficiencies in generating electrical power.

Bringing that power ashore in Oregon will not only increase resiliency for our coastal grid but allow for future projects like pump storage in the coast range and 'Green' Hydrogen production.

On behalf of the fishing communities, I will not presuppose the deployment of offshore wind. However, I am not blind to the possibilities and the benefits that such projects will bring to our communities, if we work to ensure those benefits. HB 4080 takes that first step in giving direction to the feds and also creates the next steps by helping establish a road map to future projects.

Please pass HB 4080 and the -1 amendment.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Westerman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Westerman
Business Manager
IBEW Local Union 932