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Oregon House Committee on Business and Labor

Testimony in support of HB 4080-1: Relating to State Policy on Offshore Wind

Submitted by Jena Carter, Oregon Coast and Marine Conservation Director, The Nature Conservancy

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Sosa and Elmer, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), I respectfully submit these comments in support of HB 4080 and the -1 amendment.

TNC is a science-based, non-partisan conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. TNC's priorities focus on the dual, interdependent crises of accelerated climate change and unprecedented biodiversity loss. Addressing these challenges requires action based on the best available science, collaborative partnerships, and real-world solutions to create a world where people and nature thrive.

TNC is committed to helping Oregon reach its clean electricity and greenhouse gas emission reduction goals with the least impact to nature and communities. We recognize that offshore wind energy is a potential resource with unique benefits to consider in the state and national clean energy transition, and that meeting clean energy and climate goals with minimal impact requires balancing potential development effects on ocean resources, landscapes and ecosystems.

Determining whether and how an offshore energy industry can be developed off Oregon's coast should be a thoughtful and collaborative process. To do this, we strongly support an inclusive planning process, use of best available science and Indigenous ways of knowing, tribal government consultation, transparency in decision-making, and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

HB 4080 presents an important step towards supporting Oregon's conversation on offshore wind. Key actions within this bill authorize the Department of Land Conservation and Development to:

- Support robust dialogue and engagement with Tribal governments, developers, ports, the fishing industry, stakeholders in workforce, communities, organizations including environmental organizations, and state and local governments.

- Promote a Roadmap for offshore wind that sets standards for numerous considerations including, but not limited to: effective engagement; protections for of the environment and marine species; protection of tribal, cultural, and archaeological resources; sustaining existing local and regional economies including fisheries; and evaluating ways to increase reliability and resilience of energy systems.
- Assess existing enforceable policies, identify gaps, and evaluate the adequacy of agencies to address effects resulting from any future offshore development.

This body of work does not assume an outcome, but rather establishes an important framework to center the process within impacted communities to better understand the potential impacts of offshore wind development. Based upon these conversations, it is likely that additional needs, tasks, and ideas will emerge that may require future action. TNC looks forward to being a part of this dialogue and helping advance a thoughtful evaluation of offshore wind.

Thank you for considering our comments in support of HB 4080 and the -1 amendment.