



February 8, 2024

Chair Grayber
House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 4083

Chair Grayber and Members of the Committee,

Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis. **We submit these comments in strong support of HB 4083.**

With the passage of HB 2021 and the Oregon Clean Fuels program before it, Oregon has continued its leadership role in the clean energy transition. Both those policies require a just and equitable transition to clean energy use in Oregon. It also is imperative that Oregon's fiscal policies and investments match that ambition, and support the transition away from fossil fuels. A reasonable first step is HB 4083.

HB 4083 directs the Oregon Investment Council and the State Treasurer to not make new investments in funds that significantly support thermal coal companies and further directs them to make efforts to eliminate investments in thermal coal companies within the state's portfolio. Finally, it requires an annual report to the Legislative Assembly on actions taken pursuant to this Act. These are important first steps.

We also are encouraged by the draft plan from Treasurer Read's office to more comprehensively move the state's investment portfolio away from fossil fuels more broadly with the goal of achieving net zero greenhouse gas investments over time. The draft plan was presented to the Oregon Investment Council earlier this week. Combined, these two actions will propel Oregon to the head of the national pack on state investment policies.

Oregonians are already feeling the effects of climate change. Devastating wildfires, drought, and water constraints are here, and they will intensify without effective climate mitigation measures. Given the unprecedented nature of these impacts, particularly on frontline and BIPOC communities, the public's interest in climate risks associated with our State's fiscal policy is well placed. We deserve to know where our money is invested and to ensure the Treasurer is diligently decarbonizing these investments.

We acknowledge the importance of the State Treasury's fiduciary duty. PERS manages the retirement benefits of over 130,000 public employees. That is a solemn responsibility. However,

both HB 4083 and Treasurer Read's proposal protect that fiduciary duty. Indeed, hundreds of private and public institutions have proven over the last several years that they can both protect pensions *and* transition from fossil fuels. This is no longer a risky model, but it does require preparation and perseverance. We are confident that PERS will be *better* positioned to serve the needs and desires of its members with a higher level of transparency into its investments and a plan to decarbonize those investments.

It is time for our fiscal policies to match our values in Oregon. HB 4083 represents a simple and easily executable first step toward that goal.

Sincerely,

Joshua Basofin

Joshua Basofin
Clean Energy Policy Manager
Climate Solutions