

Support for HB 4015

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our support for increasing the flexibility and optionality for counties and developers to send stand-alone Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) to the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) for permitting as proposed in HB 4015. The bill achieves this, as well as defines BESS, and clarifies that if a BESS is submitted for permitting in conjunction with a generating facility, the BESS component would be considered as part of the larger project, and would not require additional approval.

Oregon is on a path towards a 100% clean grid by 2040. However, the state is still far from reaching this target. Electric utilities are indicating a need to procure 4-6 GW of battery storage by 2040. This represents the need for a significant amount of battery storage. Some of the benefits of BESS include providing resiliency to the electric grid, protecting against energy blackouts, and increasing local resiliency by providing more local, distributed access to electricity supply.

The problem is stand-alone BESS only has one permitting pathway, which is at the county level. Other clean energy facilities, like wind and solar, often have the option to either be permitted at the county level, or at EFSC. The option to permit at EFSC is currently not available to stand-alone BESS. Adding BESS to the list of developments that can be permitted at EFSC will give flexibility to local governments under capacity, as well as optionality to developers to get their projects permitted.

The undersigned believe it is important for BESS developers and local county governments to have these flexible permitting options that each maintain thorough land use review and scrutiny. We believe HB 4015 is a reasonable bill that provides a simple fix in providing the option for stand-alone batteries to be permitted at EFSC, that will move the state closer to reaching our clean energy goals.

