

Testimony to House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection Support for HB 2966 Public Finance Task Force

January 28, 2025

Chair Sosa, Vice-Chairs Chaichi and Osborne, and members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Pat DeLaquil. I am a retired energy system modeler and climate policy analyst, and I organize with MCAT (Mobilizing Climate Action Together), which is a community of volunteers working on advancing a healthy climate and a green economy for future generations.

During my career, I have worked with World Bank and other multilateral development banks that have established successful public financing institutions as a critical component of developing cost-effective funding for projects that are considered too risky (employs new technology) or too costly (has high transaction costs) by traditional banks. These public finance institutions have helped spur significant growth in public health infrastructure, energy efficiency and clean technology projects and over time lowered risks for traditional banking institutions.

What I have observed is that successful public financing institutions need a clear charter, guidelines and standards. The charter should be broad enough to support the specific needs of the wide variety of local governments that exist across the state. Guidelines are needed to ensure the public financing institution doesn't overly disrupt traditional banking institutions, and standards are needed to hold both the public financing institutions and its customers accountable.

I support HB 2966 because it establishes a task force composed of diverse interests and directs it to study different methods of public financing in several specific realms. Oregon is not a developing economy. We have established institutions, such as local credit unions and community banks, and a public financing institution could dramatically boost their ability to offer loans and stimulate economic activity by allowing local governments to finance infrastructure projects for less costs than are imposed by large banks.


The economic development benefits that could be unlocked through smart public financing approaches are enormous. By lowering the cost of borrowing, our cities and counties can build more needed infrastructure projects, support programs to expand home ownership and grow their local economy.

We need better tools to address the challenges we currently face in terms of the lack of affordable housing, aging infrastructure and the need to harden much of our existing infrastructure to withstand the growing impacts of climate change.

I urge you to support HB 2966 and allow this task force to design and implement these new financial tools that can accelerate future economic growth for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pat DeLaquil

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pascal De Laquil III".

Gresham, OR