



February 10, 2025

Chair Lively
Vice Chairs Gamba and B. Levy
House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NW
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Consumer-Owned Utilities' Support of HB 2566 & Proposal for Clarifying Amendment to Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) Changes to Community Renewable Energy Grant Program.

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and members of the committee:

The Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association (OMEU) is made up of eleven municipally owned and operated electric utilities. The Oregon People's Utility District Association (OPUDA) includes all of Oregon's six PUDs. The Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA) represents eighteen electric cooperatives. Consumer-owned utilities (COUs) serve over one million Oregonians. We are directly accountable to the people we serve through our city councils and local governing boards. Our rates are not-for-profit and set to cover the costs of service, not to earn a rate of return for investors.

Oregon's COUs work diligently to build safe, resilient systems that stand up to extreme weather conditions year-round. Whether it be the hot summer months that bring an elevated risk of wildfire or the extreme winter conditions – like the January 2024 ice storm – that can at times cripple infrastructure across the state. COUs continually prepare for the very worst scenarios as we seek to ensure Oregonians have access to reliable power to keep themselves safe. As small, not-for-profit utilities, this work occasionally involves state or federal grant support where appropriate.

HB 2566 seeks to expand the types of projects that are eligible under the existing Community Renewable Energy Grant Program to include Stand-alone Energy Resilience projects, which would support energy resilience to community facilities critical to public welfare. We support this change and see it as a strong addition to COU strategy around increased system resilience.

We'd like to propose an amendment on p. 5 line 23 to clarify that 20% of any funds provided to the Community Renewable and Resilient Energy Grant are available for "stand-alone energy resilience projects" unless there are not enough eligible projects submitted. Currently, the language provides "20% or less," which could result in an unknown level of funding for this purpose. We think it should be 20% at a minimum.

HB 2566 represents a relatively minor adjustment to an existing program that has the potential for a significant and positive impact on system resiliency. We urge your support for HB 2566.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ted Case
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