

Testimony to House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment

Chair Lively and Committee Members:

Regarding: HB 3628 Scheduled for Public Hearing at 8:00 a.m. on February 25, 2025

I am testifying against HB 3628 and suggesting changes for the following reasons:

Adding an additional “independent” group of unpaid citizens to make critical decisions regarding energy transmission in the state will face the same recruiting problems as the Energy Facility Siting Council. Primary among the issues that have plagued this group has been the fact that they are “volunteers” with unrealistic expectations regarding the role that they should be filling. They are provided notebooks of information they are supposed to read, digest and make decisions on. That in itself has to be stressful, but add the fact that there are no requirements that council members have any training or experience prior to being placed on the council. They then make decisions that can destroy peoples lives and livelihood, drive species to the brink of extinction, etc. The lack of requiring previous expertise means council members typically simply approve recommendations of the Siting Division of Oregon Department of Energy, but it does not make it less stressful. Sincet the Siting Division is funded entirely by billing the developers who they are evaluating means most people view ODOE as working for the developers. It makes sense that there is a tendency for the department staff to be strongly influenced by the people paying their salaries.

I suggest that the committee consider Amending HB 3628 to change the makeup of the Energy Facility Siting Council to that described in this bill. The Council could then include a sub-committee performing the role suggested in this bill and bring their recommendations back to the council for approval. This change would improve the public perception of the Council as well as the decisions they make,

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