



NW Energy Coalition
for a clean and affordable energy future

**Testimony in Support
HB 3628
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NW Energy Coalition
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Members of the House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3628, which would establish the Oregon Transmission Authority and that you heard during your committee meeting on Tuesday morning.

I am appearing on behalf of the NW Energy Coalition, representing a broad range of community, environmental, clean energy, utility and local government organizations in Oregon and throughout the Northwest.

NWEC has participated in the pre-session work group and commends Rep. Gamba, his staff and all participants, for the thorough and substantive review leading to the bill, and we are pleased to support the bill and urge your approval with a do pass recommendation.

For background, I have participated for over 15 years in transmission planning at the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), the NorthernGrid regional planning organization, our utilities and the Bonneville Power Administration. Most recently I have been serving on technical review committees for the US DOE National Transmission Study, the Connected West study sponsored by all western states including Oregon through the Western Interstate Energy Board, and the current WestTEC westwide transmission planning initiative which is fully supported by Oregon's utilities and energy agencies.

As you heard from multiple parties during the hearing, transmission is key to Oregon's ability to meet its clean energy goals. While there are many opportunities to optimize the capacity of the existing transmission system, including the development of grid enhancing technologies in HB 3666 which is also before you, the fact remains that the existing system will not be able to handle the power needs of new, clean sources of generation both within Oregon and across our region to meet the growing power demand required to support our state economy, conserve our natural resources and protect our communities.

"Transmission done right" is infrastructure development that will greatly improve grid reliability which is increasingly under stress from extreme weather and wildfire. It is no small thing to say that sufficient transmission is essential to "keeping the lights on" for a modern economy and our daily lives.

It is also crucially important to expand our power grid in the right places with due protection, minimizing impacts and maximizing benefits for local communities.

As Rep. Gamba pointed out, current transmission development is simply too slow. And that process is becoming more complex in providing for protection of communities, environmental and cultural resources, preservation of fragile bio-regions and reducing our growing wildfire risks.

HB 3628 provides an important set of tools to develop new transmission infrastructure efficiently and keep costs under control while effectively addressing these many complexities. The establishment of an Oregon Transmission Authority can be a tremendous tool in bringing disparate parties to the table and balancing the interests involved in creating new transmission. Additionally, this new authority can assist Oregon in speaking with one voice and bringing our

planning, financial and technical resources into the larger regional conversations occurring around transmission. The transmission authority can bring together all of Oregon's perspectives and ensure that our interests are fully represented in the larger regional discussions that must also play a role in ensuring that our state's needs are adequately addressed.

Finally, we again thank Rep. Gamba for bringing parties together to help create this bill. The year and a half spent on understanding the need for transmission and for an authority such as the one outlined in HB 3628 is demonstrated in the broad agreement represented at today's hearing. We are pleased to offer our support and urge you to move HB 3628 forward in the process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony.