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Testimony supporting House Bill 3609

Chair Lively and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment:

As I have noted previously, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now is a grassroots climate organization of some 2,000 Southern Oregonians. We are concerned about the climate crisis and seek federal, state and local action to address it. We are rural and coastal Southern Oregonians who live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought, rising sea level and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to impose on us. Because of our concern, we pay close attention to efforts nationally, statewide, and locally that impact our collective efforts to address the climate crisis. As our logo above indicates, the focus of SOCAN is to promote action through science.

Most Oregonians are connected to power sources, usually electricity and gas. These energy inputs arrive at our homes without much fanfare. Indeed, unless we suffer a power outage, we probably don't even think about the means by which the energy reaches our home. Of course, the means by which these energy sources arrive are quite intricate and complex. In the case of gas, the product arrives via a series of mainline and distribution pipelines. Regrettably, as McVay (2023) pointed out "According to EDF's analysis, natural gas pipelines nationwide are leaking as much as 2.6 million tons of methane each year, which has the same climate impact as nearly 50 million passenger cars driven for a year on near-term warming scales." Meanwhile, the transmission grid by which electricity arrives has its own problems. As Schuetz (2024) pointed out, on one hand, power outages during or following storms result from fallen trees and downed power lines, while, on the other hand, according to the Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee, the need for energy is expected to grow 30% in the coming decade as a result, in part, from electrification. Moore (2024) noted that the Northwest will need much more transmission capacity over coming years to meet the growing demand. She also pointed out that "The lights could soon dim on the Northwest's climate goals unless the electric grid gets some serious TLC."

Those of us concerned about the climate crisis promote electrification as a means of weaning ourselves from the fossil fuels that are causing the problem. IEA (undated a) states "Electrification is one of the most important strategies for reducing CO_2 emissions from energy

in the Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario, where the majority of emissions reductions from electrification come from the shift towards electric transport and the installation of heat pumps." Meanwhile, Pickles (2025) pointed out that "When done right, the benefits of electrification—enhanced revenue, reduced emissions—extend beyond utilities to include cities and customers."

Passage of HB2021 (OLIS 2021) made Oregon a particularly valuable state in which to promote electrification because it: "Requires retail electricity providers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with electricity sold to Oregon consumers to 80 percent below baseline emissions levels by 2030, 90 percent below baseline emissions levels by 2035 and 100 percent below baseline emissions levels by 2040. Requires electric companies to develop clean energy plans and electricity service suppliers to report information for meeting clean energy targets." By 2040, in Oregon, there should be no doubt that our electricity is greenhouse gas emissions neutral.

Distributed Energy Resources are electrical generation sites other than the major utilities. They can be solar panels on a home with battery storage or electrical vehicles (IEA undated b) and they "offer multiple benefits to consumers, support decarbonisation, and improve resilience." According to SUN (2024): "Connecting a large amount of solar and battery systems together is called a Distributed Power Plant (DPP for short. It's also called a Virtual Power Plant)." The same source also describes the advantage of DPPS "DPPs work by putting together the electricity generated from rooftop solar systems with the storage capacity offered by distributed batteries. Grid operators can use the generated and stored electricity from participating solar and battery systems. This helps to prevent power outages, and turning on expensive and polluting peaker power plants. In return, solar owners earn compensation for the use of their investment."

HB3609 promotes Distributed Power Plants since it "Requires each electric company to develop a distributed power plant program for the procurement of grid services to be provided by distributed energy resources (OLIS 2025)." Among other actions, it also "Directs the Public Utility Commission to develop and adopt annual procurement targets and performance incentives."

For the above reasons Southern Oregon Climate Action Now urges support for HB3609. If we are to solve the climate crisis, we must do everything we can to encourage electrification, especially in Oregon.

Respectfully Submitted

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