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Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Testimony in opposition of SB 634

Submitted by Lauren Link, TNC OR State Policy Advisor

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Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 634, relating to the use of hydroelectric energy to comply with Oregon's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). **The Nature Conservancy (TNC) opposes SB 634**, as it undermines Oregon's clean energy goals and the intent of the RPS bill passed in 2007, which was intended to accelerate **new** renewable energy development that is needed to meet our state's growing energy demand.

As a non-partisan, science-based organization, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Oregon works in communities across the state, manages lands and waters in varied ecosystems, and partners with ranchers, farmers, fishers, timber, and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature. Addressing the climate change crisis is a core component of TNC's work to create a world in which people and nature can thrive.

With the increasing impacts of climate change and the mounting pressures on Oregon's waterways, it would be a backward step for Oregon to include hydropower in the RPS compliant list of generating resources as it would decrease the needed amount of new resources required, which would also result in decreased resource diversity and decreased reliability benefits<sup>1</sup>.

Under current statute, old hydroelectric dams can count towards Oregon's RPS, but only if the electricity is certified as low impact hydro and meets specific requirements or if new dams and diversions are outside of protected areas. We are concerned about the provisions in SB 634 that would remove these current environmental and community health requirements for hydropower's eligibility in the RPS program. This change would allow all hydropower projects to be included in the RPS, resulting in potentially harmful impacts to critical ecosystems and communities.

We urge the committee to oppose these proposed changes to the RPS and not move this bill forward. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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<sup>1</sup> Certain hydroelectric facilities are RPS compliant, these carve outs were carefully considered in the original RPS bill designs. RPS compliant hydroelectric generation includes generation attributable to efficiency upgrades made at existing hydropower facilities after 1995, and generation from an existing facility if it became certified as a low-impact hydroelectric facility after 1995