

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem Oregon 97301



March 27, 2025

**From:** *Community Renewable Energy Association - CREA*

**Subject:** *Testimony in support of SB 1160*

Honorable Chair Sollman, Vice-Chairs Brock Smith, and Members of the committee:

I'm writing on behalf of the CREA, in support of [SB 1160](#), in the matter ODOE conducting a thorough study of true costs of small-scale renewable energy.

CREA is an ORS 190 intergovernmental association. Members include counties, irrigation districts, councils of government, project developers, for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations. CREA supports business and economic opportunities through renewable energy development in a competitive environment. We support creating economically and environmentally responsible electric generation within the State of Oregon.

CREA feels there is a genuine need to better understand costs associated with small scale, independently owned generation which continues to be a topic of debate as seen on Monday.

We worked with former Senator Michael Dembrow, who was the Senator on the [Study on Small Scale Renewable Energy Projects](#) workgroup, to get this bill drafted. The point is to follow up on that study to get the information that was lacking.

For many years now CREA has heard the claims from IOUs that small scale costs more. We do not see the evidence of this.

Utilities do not get their "rate of return" when projects are independently owned, that is why smaller scale, independent projects are less favorable to the electric IOUs. The electric IOUs often focus on the least cost to ratepayers, but there is more to consider, when small-scale projects return 3-5 times the investment in local communities, while improving resiliency, reducing line loss and reducing the burden on transmission.

Aside from added resilience to our grid, and being a cost-effective form of generation in our state and region. Small, local PUPRA projects are important to Oregon, and especially rural Oregon where these sites are located, because of investment and stable employment for the local communities. The visual appearance of small-scale is also far more palatable to

the neighbors living in our rural communities, when compared to large scale projects that in many cases are thousands of acres in size.

Smaller scale projects also provide another opportunity for landowners to generate income and diversify the stewardship of their land. These small renewable projects typically pay taxes or fees-in-lieu-of-taxes to counties that get divvied up to support their local public services and special districts such as fire departments, libraries, schools and more.

The -1 amendment we have requested will narrow the focus of the study to the actual financial costs of developing small-scale renewable energy projects developed in the state. We hope to look at costs to develop projects of -

- 10MW (A PURPA threshold)
- 20MW (Oregon Small-scale threshold)
- and 80MW (federal PURPA threshold)

The study will also consider secondary benefits as part of the cost to the small-scale projects, such as resiliency, line loss and reliability.

We know data is needed from utilities and independent developers in order for this study to work, which was missing in the [Study on Small Scale Renewable Energy Projects](#) completed in 2022.

CREA would like to thank Senator Nash and former Senator Dembrow, in addition to our other sponsors, for helping to bring this bill forward and ask that you pass it with the -1 amendment. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



James Williams  
CREA Executive Director