

My name is Paulette Bierzychudek and I am an Oregon resident from House district 41. I write to offer my strong support for the four Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub bills (HB 3450, HB 2152, HB 2949, and HB 2151) to be discussed at Thursday's hearing. These bills are the logical next step after the 2022 passage of SB 1567, which created an Energy Security Plan for Oregon.

It is inevitable that Portland will experience a massive earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Since we don't know when this earthquake will occur, it is imperative that we prepare now for its inevitability. Currently, 90% of Oregon's liquid fuels are stored at Portland's Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub along the Willamette River, a few miles north of downtown Portland. SB 3450 would require that the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) develop an Energy Storage Transition Plan for the CEI Hub that would help determine how these materials might be stored in less risky ways.

An important recommendation of the ODOE's Energy Security Plan was that these materials be more dispersed geographically, both to avoid the loss of such a large fraction of our fuel supplies during the Cascadia earthquake, and to reduce the effect of such a catastrophe on the citizens of Portland, especially those communities nearest the CEI Hub. HB 2152 would mandate the development of a plan to increase the geographical diversity of fuel storage stations, thus spreading the risk.

Even if greater geographic dispersion is achieved, the Cascadia earthquake will still cause massive damage to the neighborhoods near the CEI Hub. Currently, the owners of CEI facilities are not required to carry insurance to cover the cost of mitigation and cleanup. SB 2949 would require an independent assessment of the possibility of requiring CEI owners to obtain financial instruments, such as insurance or bonds, to cover these costs. Otherwise our state – and an increasingly unreliable federal government – are left responsible for all of these costs.

Finally, given that some of the costs of mitigation will nevertheless fall to the state, HB 2151 would expand the kinds of activities that the current Seismic Risk Mitigation Fund could be used to finance. In particular, HB 2151 would allow these funds to be used to plan for these inevitable disasters through early detection activities, evacuation planning, and other life-saving actions.

All four of these bills will help to protect Oregon's citizens from the worst effects of a disaster that we know to be inevitable. For these reasons I urge your support of these four bills: HB 3450, HB 2152, HB 2949, and HB 2151. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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