

**Before the House Committee on
Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans**

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1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is John Talberth, and I am the President and Senior Economist for the Center for Sustainable Economy, based in Port Townsend, Washington.

2. I am here to offer some brief comments on House Bills 2151, 2152, 2949, and 3450.

3. HB 2151 provides DEQ with flexibility to use seismic risk mitigation plan fees for preparedness efforts related to fires that could be triggered by a major earthquake. I think this measure is fine as is but should be modified to allow DEQ to use those funds to help communities prepare for fires triggered by all causes, not just those related to a major earthquake. After all it is the smaller events that are the most likely, and the most frequent.

4. HB 2152 is a bit worrisome. It is all about relocating and even expanding fossil fuel infrastructure at a time when we should be rapidly reducing our demand for liquid fuels. It may be better to leave the concentration of fuels in the CEI Hub alone, especially if seismic retrofits have been completed, and concentrating on ways to electrify our disaster response and recovery fleet so that additional liquid fuel infrastructure is not needed.

5. California provides a useful example. The California Energy Commission has invested millions of dollars to provide backup power and support statewide grid reliability in the event of an emergency. These microgrids can support hospitals, emergency operations centers and other facilities that will be critical in the event of a catastrophic event. They can also support an electrified fleet of emergency vehicles. In 2019, when California's Pacific Gas & Electric imposed the region's first public safety power shutoff to prevent wildfires, the Blue Lake

Rancheria tribe of less than 100 members served an estimated 10,000 people in less than 30 hours with their solar powered microgrid. Such an investment in electrifying emergency response with decentralized emergency microgrid hubs around the state in Oregon is a far safer way in which to prepare for emergencies.

6. HB 2949 echoes language our institute, Center for Sustainable Economy, first proposed in 2016 that would require a study of options for requiring financial assurances at bulk oil terminals. In Multnomah County our team worked with the County to commission a similar study for the CEI Hub. I don't think we need another such study since the results from the CEI Hub study can serve as the basis for statewide regulation as well. So I would recommend skipping the study and going directly to enacting requirements for financial assurances that not only cover potential taxpayer costs in the event of a catastrophic accident at fossil fuel infrastructure sites but also require financial assurance for decommissioning of fossil fuel infrastructure once it's no longer needed.

7. Decommissioning should also be an important component of HB 3450. Communities around the CEI Hub long for the day when we can start talking about dismantling risky fossil fuel infrastructure and cleaning the land up so that it can support beneficial land uses in the future. Instead of focusing on an energy storage transition plan the bill should focus on a transition plan that can lay the groundwork for investments in wetland restoration, open space, small businesses, affordable housing and other uses of that site once the vast tank farm that now occupies the area is obsolete. In fact, there are already many unused or idle tanks that can be the focus for early land use transition planning, and I think the bill would be stronger if it were able to jumpstart that process now.

8. Thank you for your attention and incorporation of these comments into the final language.

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