

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Testimony on SB 1582 -2 amendment – Support

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Submitted by Lauren Link, State Policy Advisor

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of SB 1582 with the -2 amendment**. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a non-partisan, science-based organization that works in communities across the state, manages lands and waters in varied ecosystems, and partners with ranchers, farmers, fishers, timber, and environmental interests to address the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. TNC's vision of a rapid and responsible clean energy transition is rooted in our science-based approach to helping create, implement, and defend strong and durable climate policies as well as develop new strategies and explore opportunities that center the needs and input of our communities.

TNC supports SB 1582 with the -2 amendment because it would require utilities to create a community-based power program or virtual power plant (VPP) that would leverage consumers' existing energy resources during peak times, helping to lower utility bills, stabilize the electric grid, and meet the increasing energy demand.

We commend the utilities' successful implementation of VPP pilot programs to date but see urgent need to increase the pace and scale of VPP implementation. SB 1582 with the -2 amendment is critical to scaling up implementation because the bill includes third party aggregators to assist with customer engagement and adoption, establishes utility guidelines and consumer protections, standardizes program design, and creates directives and timelines for VPP deployment across the state.

As Oregon faces increasing energy demand on an already strained electric grid, it is imperative that we maximize use of existing energy infrastructure through greater implementation of VPPs, which would reduce peak demands on the transmission system, increase resiliency during extreme weather events, and lower costs for Oregonians.