



NW Energy Coalition

for a clean and affordable energy future

February 13, 2026

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE, Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

The NW Energy Coalition is composed of over 100 organizations focused on environmental, civic, and human services, along with progressive utilities and businesses. We advocate for clean, equitable, safe, and affordable energy policies across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. We offer the following perspectives based on our review of utility wildfire liability frameworks in the region and our active engagement in evaluating investor-owned utility wildfire mitigation plans, rulemaking, and implementation processes.

The NW Energy Coalition honors and appreciates the efforts to ensure proper fire survivor compensation and is pleased that this concept avoids the use of ratepayer funds for these payments. We wholeheartedly agree that there must be a better, more timely path for past and future fire survivors to receive compensation without being subjected to prolonged legal hurdles, unnecessary burdens, or the retraumatization that can accompany these claim processes. Our concerns with SB 1553 focus on utility financial stability and the potential negative consequences of increased utility borrowing costs, delays on important investments and projects, and ultimately, increased customer rates and a less reliable grid. **Due to these concerns, we respectfully oppose SB 1553 and encourage additional time, research, and stakeholder engagement to thoroughly explore policy approaches.**

We believe any changes to wildfire liability law should be guided by the following principles: affordable rates, accessible and timely fire survivor compensation, utility financial stability, accountability, grid reliability, and safety. These principles are not in conflict, but achieving the right balance requires careful analysis and thoughtful design.

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) recently adopted PUC Staff's recommendation to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to engage an expert consultant to develop a report on policy options for *both* investor-owned and consumer-owned utility wildfire liability risk. The goal of this effort is to balance the principles mentioned above ([See PUC Order No. 26-034](#)).¹ This report is planned to be finalized by the end of 2026 and will provide the PUC and Oregon policymakers with a list of options that clearly outline the pros and cons of various approaches and detailed recommendations to help structure policy for Oregon to address utility wildfire liability. We hope this process is able to further engage discussion amongst parties and we encourage the report to be used for bill concepts in Oregon's 2027 legislative session.

Respectfully,

Alessandra de la Torre
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NW Energy Coalition

¹ <https://apps.puc.state.or.us/orders/2026ords/26-034.pdf>