



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Marsh
Vice-Chairs Helm and Brock Smith
Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment

FR: Catie Theisen, OR AFL-CIO

RE: Need for Strong Labor Protections in HB 2021

March 22, 2021

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across the state and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. As such, we've long advocated for policies to ensure that a clean energy economy is one that also creates and promotes family-supporting jobs and protects workers in impacted industries. And that's because we know that Oregon's communities and economy can only truly thrive when there are policies in place to ensure comprehensive training, robust input from Oregonians most impacted, and jobs that are safe and provide good benefits. Simply put: strong labor protections and standards must be a component to any clean energy policy in order for our state to realize the transformational power of a high-road, clean energy future.

We appreciate the inclusion of labor standards in the -1 amendment. However, we are very concerned that the amendment is too narrow in applying to 'voluntary renewable options' or green tariffs. We strongly believe that labor standards must apply to all forms of contracts procured by investor-owned utilities. In addition, we continue to call for including baseline labor protections including an apprenticeship requirement, prevailing wage requirement, health and retirement requirement, and the utilization of project labor agreements. The addition of these provisions will:

- Enable good quality jobs for Oregon workers
- Create inclusive career pathways for women, people of color, and veterans
- Enable labor, apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship programs, contractors, and developers to collaborate to build Oregon's clean energy workforce
- Allow for skills development for other improvements beyond renewables such as energy efficiency, school retrofits, transportation, etc. to continue to diversify our jobs and economy

These standards will ensure that we are creating an economy in the renewable and storage space that will set Oregon's environment, economy and communities up for success for generations to come.

Oregon's essential workers -- including many who work in construction to keep our infrastructure running -- have worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. And they deserve to be at the center of policy, particularly when it has the potential to produce major shifts in Oregon's economy.

As a state we need to live our values: that includes proactively addressing climate change, but it also includes promoting and creating family wage, quality jobs that Oregonians can be proud of. Ultimately, any climate action that leaves behind workers and communities disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change is a policy and a process that should be rejected. We ask you to significantly strengthen the labor protections in HB 2021 to promote a healthy economy and communities.