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Re: Rogue Climate Testimony regarding HB 2064, 2065, and 2066

Chair Power and Members of the House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 2064, 2065, and 2066: Relating to Microgrids.

Rogue Climate serves and works alongside Southern Oregon and South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, and communities of color, by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, and a healthy environment. We do so through leadership development, political education, and campaigns for policies that benefit our communities.

We are writing in support of HB 2064, 2065, and 2066 to open the door to community energy resilience and microgrid development. Urban, suburban and rural stakeholders across the state have identified energy resilience and microgrid development as a top priority to respond to and recover from grid disruptions in their communities. There are currently zero community-owned front-of-meter microgrids operating in Oregon today.

The reality is that rural and coastal communities are experiencing more frequent and severe grid disruptions. The main drivers are the increased occurrence and severity of natural disasters like wildfires, extreme weather, and the threat of tsunamis and earthquakes; unprecedented load growth on the state's grid from energy intensive users; and a desire to protect against rising energy costs through local energy production and energy storage. This past week, communities in the Rogue Valley have been experiencing rolling blackouts due to snow and ice, and in the summer of 2024, stranding community members without heating and electricity during hazardous conditions. In the summer of 2024, Pacific Power's shut offs left residents without power for days during extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

Microgrids are a solution that enable communities to respond to and recover from grid disruptions more quickly, especially in rural Oregon where there is limited transmission connection and high energy burdens. Microgrids also pave the way for more local renewable energy generation and battery storage, in turn reducing community reliance on fossil fuels. HBs 2064, 2065, and 2066 will enable higher climate resilience in our most vulnerable communities while helping us meet clean energy mandates.

HBs 2064, 2065, and 2066 are a step in the right direction to put more decision-making power into the hands of local communities while helping Oregon reach its clean energy goals.

Sincerely,

Jess Grady-Benson, Organizing Director

Zoe Serrano, Legislative Coordinator