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Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Testimony in support of SB 1518

Submitted by Laura Tabor, Climate Action Director

Chair Lieber and Members of the Committee:

We write to express our support of SB 1518, which takes an important step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions from new buildings in Oregon by allowing local jurisdictions to adopt a reach code that is at least 10% more efficient than existing statewide building energy codes.

The Nature Conservancy in Oregon (TNC) is a science-based, non-partisan organization with 80,000 supporters and members in every county. Based in communities around the state, we manage lands and waters in varied ecosystems and partner with tribes, ranchers, farmers, fishers, timber, and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature. We strongly believe that Oregonians have a responsibility to enact policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enable the necessary responses to climate change.

Enabling local jurisdictions to adopt the reach code is critical for several reasons:

- Buildings are the second highest source of emissions in Oregon—tackling this sector is an important next step following the success of recent policies addressing emissions from electricity, industry, and transportation.
- Oregon's building stock is growing rapidly in many areas; adopting a reach code in these areas would have an outsize impact on this important sector.
- During construction is the cheapest time to add energy efficiency features to a building. Building efficiently from the start costs little relative to home prices and locks in low energy costs and comfort for homeowners and businesses for the life of the building.
- Offering a single, higher-efficiency option avoids a patchwork of codes in different jurisdictions and still allows local governments to maintain statewide base codes.

We thank the bill's sponsors for bringing this legislation forward and appreciate this committee's leadership in considering it. We encourage you to pass this bill to the floor.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.