

Dear Oregon State Senators,

The climate justice and environmental groups that have signed this letter are writing to express concerns about how the Oregon Strategic Investment Program is being used. Our groups are committed to moving as rapidly as possible to the use of renewable energy. We also believe that climate measures must be implemented in a just manner with respect to racial and gender equity, as well as to labor standards.

We have learned that a high percentage of the solar and wind projects in Eastern Oregon, including “re-power” work replacing wind turbine blades and rotors, are frequently awarded to out-of-state companies that bring in non-union and lower skilled workers rather than hiring from the local workforce. These companies do not help build Oregon communities, and yet many of them receive Oregon tax abatements under the Oregon Strategic Investment Program.

Members of the groups listed below are committed to addressing the climate crisis and the Strategic Investment Program can help bring wind and solar companies to our state. However we need labor and equity standards governing how renewable companies are brought in. There should be accountability in adhering to those standards, especially because taxpayer money is being allocated. Low road wind and solar jobs in eastern Oregon are not the good green jobs we are fighting for and we want to make clear that we do not support such low road renewable energy projects. We can do better.

We support the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council and its affiliates in their effort to see legislation passed requiring companies that benefit from state tax subsidies to meet high road labor and workforce standards. These standards would include requirements to utilize a local workforce with set goals for hiring, training, and retaining women and people of color, pay prevailing wage, and take part in apprenticeship programs. This cannot be left to the voluntary “good will” of employers. We need legislation that *mandates* that high labor and workforce values be upheld by companies receiving Oregon subsidies.

We know you care about how climate change is seriously hurting our state. As you are well aware, the fires of 2020 add to the other recent years of destructive forest fires, increased warming and shrinking water resources. But we can't move rapidly to a sustainable future on the backs of Oregon's workers. When taxpayer money is used to subsidize an industry, it should be used in a way that raises standards rather than lowering them. Please support legislation requiring companies that benefit from Oregon tax subsidies to meet high road labor and workforce standards.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you further. Please feel free to send any comments to Climate Jobs co-chairs, Dave King (landd_2@q.com) or Mark Darienzo (markdari@pacifier.com)