



2023 Legislative Session – CREA Report February 5, 2023

Key Session Dates:

- January 17 – Session Begins
- February 17– LC Draft Returns
- February 21– Bill Introduction Deadline
- March 17 – Work Session Posting Deadline
- April 4 – First Chamber Work Session Deadline
- May 5 – 2nd Work Session Posting Deadline
- May 19 – 2nd Chamber Work Session Deadline
- June 25 – Constitutional Sine Die

The large group of freshman legislators and Governor Tina Kotek were sworn into their new posts on January 9th, with the session officially kicking off the following week. The Legislature has now been in session for three weeks. Construction and hybrid working, have seemed to lead to a slow start. Mostly legislators have been watching informational hearings on various topics, to help quickly get them up to speed on their policy areas. Some bills, with less opposition, have received public hearings, but very few of the 2000+ bills introduced so far have been voted on. We went through all the introduced bills and created the attached list of all the bills of interest to CREA this session, we have prioritized most of them, with more coming out for review each week. Attached is the bill list and calendar of all the scheduled bills. Below you can find many general updates as well as information on the issues CREA has been working on.

Legislative Updates

Newest House Member

On Thursday, Curry County Commissioner Court Boice was appointed by his colleagues at the Coos, Curry and Douglas County Commissions to fill David Brock Smith's State House seat on the Southern Oregon Coast. David Brock Smith was appointed to the Senate earlier in January.

House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Monday, Jan. 30 – Biennial Report & HB 2714 Public Hearing

The committee also got a [presentation](#) from ODOE on the Biennial Energy Report. Then ODOT and DEQ testified [on incentive programs for zero-emission medium & heavy duty vehicles](#), before the public hearing on [HB 2714](#) to provide incentives for transitioning to cleaner vehicles.

Wednesday, Feb. 1 – PURPA, [HB 2533](#) & [HB 3055](#) Public Hearings

At the House Committee On Climate, Energy and Environment meetings, the committee learned about the federal and state PURPA laws before hearing two bills ([HB 2533](#) & [HB 3055](#)) brought by the Community Renewable Energy Association (CREA). Mike McArthur & Alan Hickenbottom of CREA as well as Jack Watson of OSSIA testified in favor of the bills but asked for a couple small adjustments to each. Sustainable NW is also supporting the bills and doing some individual follow-up meetings with legislators. No opposition was presented.

Senate Energy and Environment Committee

Tuesday, Jan. 31 - Hydrogen

There was an informational hearing on Hydrogen in the Senate Energy and Environment Committee at 1pm. Rebecca Smith, Senior Energy Policy Analyst at Oregon Department of Energy, [shared information on the Renewable Hydrogen study](#) they had recently completed. Michelle Detwiler, ED of the Renewable Hydrogen Alliance [presented an overview and the best uses](#), before sharing the legislation they are bringing this session: [SB 124](#) & [SB 125](#). Evan Ransey, with the Bonneville Environmental Foundation was on the panel as well. Legislators asked about affordability and had follow up questions on the best uses to understand the focus on transportation uses.

Chair Janeen Sollman is holding time to every meeting agenda to hear from youth. This week one high school student testified against fossil fuel usage and in support of green, unblended hydrogen.

Thursday, Feb. 2 – HB 2021 Implementation & SB 64 Public Hearing

The committee had a hearing on HB 2021 (2021) implementation. [ODOE](#), the [PUC](#), the IOUs ([PAC](#) & [PGE](#)) and [CUB](#) testified. ODOE went over the Community Renewable Energy Grants. The rest of the testimony was heavily focused on the utility IRPs and Clean Energy Plans (CEPs) due in March of 2023.

Next was a public hearing on [SB 64](#), which requires DEQ to study the disposal of electric vehicle batteries and batteries used to store energy in wind or solar renewable energy facilities. Sponsors Sen. Findley & Rep. Owens testified about how while they support renewable energy development, they think it is prudent to look ahead at what can be done with the physical batteries and turbines once they have reached their end of life. They seemed optimistic about finding solutions that were homegrown. Diane Brandt of RNW spoke in support of the concept and proposed improvements. No one testified in opposition. Several letters have been submitted by Verde, RNW, OSSIA, CUB, Climate Solutions and citizens [here](#).

House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

Thursday, Feb. 2 – Invited Testimony & Public Hearing on Economic Opportunities of RE

EcoNorthwest, New Sun and OCEAN were invited to speak before the committee about the recent renewable energy economic development study commissioned by NewSun and conducted by EcoNorthwest. Shannon with Oregon Coast Energy Alliance Network (OCEAN) kicked off the [presentation](#) to talk about how the study was conducted and the \$50 to \$70B benefit that is possible for Oregon. EcoNorthwest then provided more information about the study and the findings of direct and indirect economic impacts. Jake with NewSun spoke about the many benefits of local community-based renewable energy development and fielded questions about jobs and environmental impacts. Mike McArthur gave public testimony at the hearing, talking about the local benefits for small-scale renewable projects being built in Oregon, highlighting the rapid positive financial transformation renewable energy projects helped bring to Sherman County. Several Republicans had questions for the panel regarding job loss, environmental land impacts, and end of life of the materials used. Panelists did a great job debunking some of the inherent negative assumptions tied up in the questions asked.

Upcoming:

CREA will be doing joint meetings with Sunthurst this week to support community solar bills - [HB 3020](#) and [SB 54](#). SB 54, which would provide a full tax exemption on community solar projects, has a public hearing set in the Senate Energy and Environment Committee this Tuesday at 2pm. Mike McArthur of CREA will testify in support alongside Sunthurst and OSSIA

Other Updates

DEQ Director Update

The EQC will meet next week to decide on its next Department of Environmental Quality Director, either Jamie McLeod-Skinner (former 5th district congressional candidate) or current interim director Leah Feldon.

Broadband Office Changes

Nick Batz left his role as government affairs liaison at Business Oregon to head up the Oregon Broadband Office. Mark Gharst, formerly at the Dept. of Revenue and most recently the Tax and Fiscal Policy Lobbyist at the League of Oregon Cities will take over Nick's old position.

Rail Spill

On Jan. 31, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was alerted to a rail spill of approximately 30 gallons of diesel fuel along Union Pacific Railroad tracks in North Portland. Find the news release [here](#).

Governor's Executive Orders

Governor Kotek signed three Executive Orders related to housing production and homelessness on January 10. Read more about all three Executive Orders on the [Governor's website](#).

Executive Order No. 23-02 declares a state of emergency due to homelessness in the following regions of the state that have experienced a 50% or more increase in unsheltered homelessness between 2017 to 2022:

- Portland Metro region (50.4%);
- Central Oregon (86%);
- Eugene, Springfield/Lane County (110%);
- Medford, Ashland/Jackson County (132%); and
- Salem/Marion, Polk Counties (150%).

Executive Order No. 23-03 directs state agencies, using their existing statutory authorities, to prioritize reducing both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness across the state.

Executive Order 23-04 sets a statewide housing production goal of 36,000 units per year and establishes the Housing Production Advisory Council.