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November 19, 2021

Via Electronic Filing

Filing Center Public Utility Commission of Oregon
201 High Street SE, Suite 100
P.O. Box 1088
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Docket AR 638 - Wildfire Mitigation Rulemaking

Rogue Climate, an environmental justice non-profit serving communities in Southern Oregon and the South Coast, appreciates the opportunity to submit comments into the record concerning the Public Utility Commission of Oregon's (OPUC) draft rules for AR 638.

Division 24

860-024-0016 - Minimum Vegetation Clearance Requirements

As written currently in the rulemaking, the purpose for these vegetation clearance requirements is "to provide safety for the public and utility workers, reasonable service continuity, and fire prevention." Rogue Climate wants to highlight that during the 10/11/2021 AR 638 Workshop, OPUC staff mentioned one of the reasons behind the addition of a minimum three-year trim cycle requirement was due to some utilities' not currently maintaining proper vegetative clearance (referred to as "shortcomings" and "cost-saving" during the Workshop).

Rogue Climate believes it is reasonable to require a minimum three-year trim cycle with the opportunity for utilities to provide proper documentation confirming compliance with the minimum clearances and therefore utilizing alternate trim cycles with the confirmation from Safety Staff. The OPUC is responsible for regulating utilities in order to ensure the safety, reliability, and quality of essential utility services, and should therefore, mandate trim cycles. It is also important for the OPUC to give more clarity on what type of documentation utilities would need to provide.

Wildfires in Oregon have devastated many of our communities and climate change will only exacerbate this for years to come. It is crucial that these rules are strong, and do not prioritize profit or cost-saving measures for companies over public safety.

860-24-0018 - High Risk Zone Safety Standards

Concerning OAR 860-024-0018 (3) (b), there has been conversation and comments submitted regarding the implementation of technologies, such as drones, to conduct inspections in High Fire Risk Zones. Before this is accepted as an alternative mode of inspection, OPUC should conduct an analysis and review credible data on the reliability of suggested technologies to guarantee if these technologies can provide detailed inspections.

Rogue Climate appreciates the addition of utilities conducting annual fire season safety protocols in High Fire Risk Zones put forth in OAR 860-024-0018 (4).

The OPUC should lay out a path to achieve the goals of the safety standards for High Risk Fire Zones. This includes mitigating the issues arising around trees from outside the right-of-way, joint inspections, and pole ownership. Whether solutions can come in forms of legislation, executive orders, or involving other regulatory agencies or processes, identifying paths to address these issues is crucial to mitigate wildfire risk and keep our communities safe and with power.

Division 300

Though Division 300 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Phase I rules currently in the formal rulemaking in Docket No. AR 648, Rogue Climate would like to reiterate and point back to both [Rogue Climate's comments](#) and [Joint comments with advocacy stakeholders](#) submitted on May 3, 2021 in regards to Public Safety Power Shutoffs, specifically with relevance to these sections:

- 860-300-0002 - Definitions for this Division
- 860-300-0006 - Communications Requirements Prior, During, and After a Public Safety Power Shutoff
- 860-300-0007 - Ongoing Informational Requirements for Public Safety Power Shutoffs
- 860-300-0009 - Cost Recovery

Rogue Climate understands the purpose of Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), and sees PSPS as a last means to mitigate wildfire risk, yet normalizing this as a solution is not meeting the standards of increasing grid reliability and ensuring public safety.

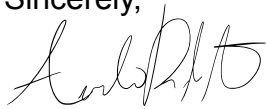
As stated in Rogue Climate's previous comments, "During a PSPS incident, there should be appropriate resources for high-risk community members to access life-saving electricity, whether it is being supplied with backup power resources or ensuring communities have access to emergency resiliency hubs."

Community resilience is crucial as wildfires continue to devastate Oregon and the need for accessing energy and information about PSPS notifications becomes imperative for survival and wellbeing.

As various rulemakings continue to be quickly developed in the OPUC, ODOE, and other departments regarding wildfire and energy systems, it is imperative that agencies across the board are in communication and alignment on overlapping pieces for regulation, including but not limited to, definitions, energy system transitions or improvements, implementation of HB 2021, implementation of SB 762 and so forth.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing these recommendations and considering them throughout the implementation process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alessandra de la Torre', written in a cursive style.

Alessandra de la Torre

Energy Justice Organizer, Rogue Climate

