



Chair Shewmake, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SB 5466. My name is Casey MacLean, Washington Policy Manager at Renewable Northwest. We are a nonprofit with members in the renewable energy industry as well as environmental groups, and we have the mission to decarbonize the region by accelerating the transition to affordable, renewable electricity.

We are signed in today as “PRO.” Washington’s existing transmission system lacks the capacity to support our state’s rapidly growing electricity demand, at a time when we are also striving to achieve our clean energy targets. This bill puts forward a sensible solution: it would create a Washington transmission office that would improve our transmission system by engaging in long-term planning, providing development support services, coordinating siting and permitting, leveraging research, and engaging other entities working in this space. Enhancing our transmission system in these ways will improve grid reliability and resilience to extreme weather events, help us achieve our CETA targets, and help maintain affordable energy rates.

We do have suggestions for improvement along with a more detailed redline that we worked on in coordination with NIPPC. We have two primary ideas for your consideration. First, we think it would be optimal for this entity to be housed independently, outside of the Commerce department, which will help ensure sound decision-making in sensitive scenarios. Secondly, we believe it would be helpful for this entity to be granted revenue bonding authority, rather than merely studying its feasibility; other states with transmission authorities have successfully used revenue bond authority to support transmission.

We are grateful for your leadership on this pressing issue and we’re happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Casey MacLean
Washington Policy Manager
Renewable Northwest