



HB 4121: Funding Energy Upgrades

Testimony for Economic Development and Trade 2.7.2018

HB 4121 would allocate \$18 million to the Housing and Community Services Department for homeowners with up to \$200,000 annual income to apply a maximum of \$4,500 toward energy improvement projects—but only \$1.8 million (i.e., at least 10% of the fund) would provide grants to improve the dwellings of low income or very low income owners.

Tax Fairness Oregon opposes General Fund support of energy improvement subsidies for homeowners with up to \$200,000 annual income. Instead 100% of the funds should be directed to the homes of low and very low income Oregonians using government definitions of those populations.

However, we do believe that given an adequate revenue stream, the allocation of funds for grants for energy improvement projects and repair projects for homes of low income families, including manufactured dwellings, owned by low income and very low income residents are justified by the reduction of their energy expenses and the environmental benefits that result, and we understand that help through the process can be essential. And we appreciate that this is a grant program rather than a tax credit program.

We do note that homeowners, rental property owners and the HCSD already receive support for energy upgrades from the Energy Trust of Oregon for Oregonians in their service area, and from many publicly owned utilities elsewhere in the state, so this program would need to be carefully targeted, and should only serve low and very low income residents.

We read the bills and follow the money