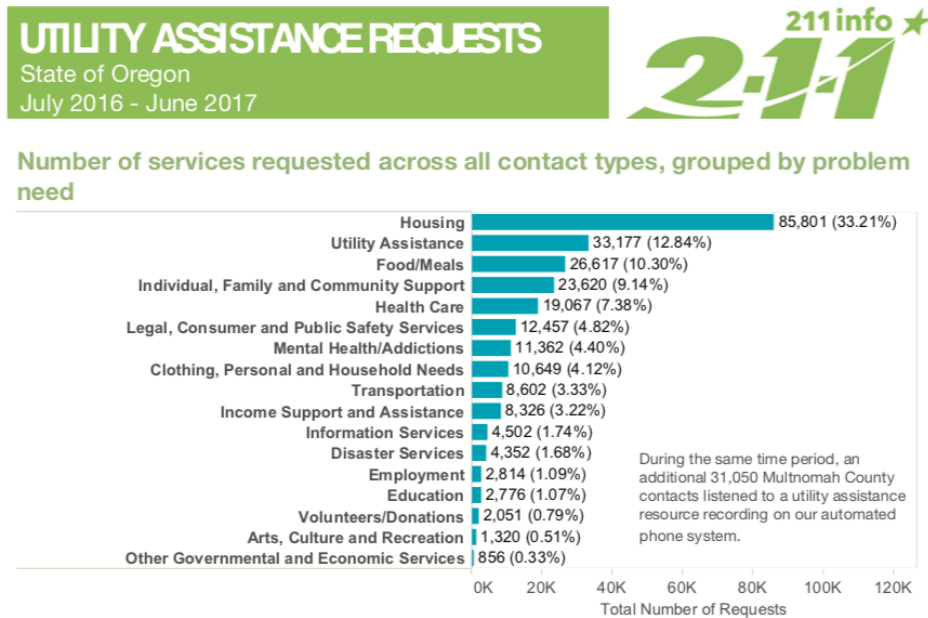


Chair Helm and members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment,

Thank you, Chair Helm for being one of the sponsors of this important bill. I urge your committee to please pass HB 2242.

I was among a few citizen stakeholders engaged in the SB 978 process.^[1] I applaud Julie Peacock and her colleagues at Oregon Public Utility Commission for extending this invitation to ordinary citizens whose participation in the stakeholder process don't create a narrowed interest. Future task forces and working groups should strive to emulate this process to create more inclusivity and objectivity surrounding complex policy issues.

I learned a lot about regulating investor owned utilities—something I anticipated. But I had not anticipated learning what I did about low-income households from the dedicated stakeholder groups in the SB 978 process. From my own research on this topic, I found this striking statistic. Utility assistance calls are #2 in rank order for services requested by 211 info.^[2]



As such, OPUC should be authorized to consider differential energy burden and other inequities of affordability when determining rates. While the Citizens' Utility Board^[3] is an effective watchdog of residential bills in the "least cost, least risk" regulatory framework OPUC currently has in place, CUB is insufficient because equity is not a leading principle for their advocacy work.

For that, it is imperative that an Office of a Low-Income and Environmental Justice Advocate be created and funded within OPUC. This office would be invaluable as this individual would be a direct link to the interests of Oregonians, so long neglected in energy and environmental policies.

Respectfully,
Kris Alman M.D.

^[1] Passed in 2017, this bill required the Public Utility Commission to establish a public process for purpose of investigating how industry trends, technologies and policy drivers in electricity sector might impact existing regulatory system and incentives currently employed by commission. <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Measures/Overview/SB978>

^[2] <https://211info.org/>

^[3] <https://oregoncub.org/about-us/>

Kris Alman