



April 2, 2019

TO: Chair Helm, House Committee on Energy and Environment  
FROM: The Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
RE: HB 2494

Dear Chair Helm, and members of the committee:

The Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) supports HB 2494 to extend the Public Purpose Charge (PPC). CAPO is Oregon's statewide non-profit association for the 18-member community action network of providers serving very low-income Oregonians in every region of the State, including migrant farmworkers. We work in collaboration with a variety of agency partners, representing the non-profit sector, local, state and federal governments, advocacy groups, policymakers and low-income leaders. The network programs and services include: shelter programs, housing assistance, regional food banks, Head Start, energy assistance, weatherization, asset building programs (e.g. IDAs, first time homebuyer programs, financial management classes), and child-care resource centers.

We support the extension of the PPC because of its support for low-income families in Oregon. The public purpose charge was enacted through SB 1149 by the 1999 legislature. Maintained in statute in ORS 757.612, the law designates a specific level of funding, 12%, from PGE and PacifiCorp ratepayers to be spent on low-income weatherization activities called Energy Conservation Helping Oregonians (ECHO). The PPC supports CAPO's efforts to increase community well-being, economic vitality, and environmental stewardship. We seek a continuation of funds that will improve the indoor environmental conditions of Oregonians by incorporating multiple initiatives and using a "one-touch" philosophy by pairing grant-funded work with current weatherization services. These policies keep more Oregonians warm and in their homes.

Since the PPC was passed CAPO has weatherized 25,000 single-family homes and OHCS has weatherized an additional 10,101 multifamily units. These homes experience lower energy bills and non-energy benefits that increase the livability of low-income housing. Because these investments have improved the livelihood of Oregon families, CAPO supports HB2494 and extending the PPC to 2036.

Sincerely,

Janet Merrell  
Executive Director