



Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair

Jessica Vega Pederson
Multnomah County Commissioner

501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 600
Portland, Oregon 97214
Phone: (503) 988-3308
Email: mult.chair@multco.us

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House Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, Room D
Salem, OR 97301

Multnomah County Supports HB 4067

Chair Power and Members of the Committee:

Multnomah County asks for your support of House Bill 4067, a thoughtful approach to giving voice to and protecting Oregon's most vulnerable communities in the transition to a just, clean energy future.

In 2017, the legislature adopted Senate Bill 978, which initiated a process to consider the many trends that are changing the landscape of electric utilities and their regulation. Multnomah County staff appreciated the opportunity to participate in the process, and recognized Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) staff for their commitment to a process where all participants were heard and felt valued. The SB 978 process made clear that having many voices and perspectives at the table is essential to moving towards a more innovative and equitable energy system in the future. HB 4067 builds on the foundational work of the SB 978 process by building procedural and distributional equity into electric utility regulation in Oregon.

First, the bill will help ensure that voices of low income and environmental justice communities are heard by resourcing community organizations to represent the needs of their communities in the often complex proceedings of the OPUC. In our work to advance a just energy transition,

Multnomah County has been proud to partner with many of those individuals and organizations who are eager to share their expertise and experience at the OPUC if resourced to do so.

Second, HB 4067 recognizes the profound impact energy poverty has on Oregonians across the state, and establishes a path to address the disproportionate burden low income rate payers face. Multnomah County is proud of the low income energy assistance and weatherization programs we provide to support the economic and overall well-being of our community members each day. However, unless we consider additional approaches to the challenge, we will never be able to address the devastation energy poverty brings to communities across the state. Nor will be able to hold harmless those community members with the fewest resources to thrive during the transition to a renewable future. HB 4067 creates a pathway for differentiated electric utility rates that will allow Multnomah County and its partners to aggressively pursue local and state renewable goals and protect the most vulnerable members of our community while doing so.

HB 4067 is the right approach for Oregon, and Multnomah County looks forward to working the Legislature, OPUC, utilities and the broad diversity of stakeholders to put HB 4067 into practice to advance a just energy transition in the state.

I appreciate your consideration of these comments and ask for your support of HB 4067.

Sincerely,



Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair



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