



February 4, 2020

Chair Power, Vice-Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Reschke and members of the Committee,

The Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working at the intersection of renewable energy and freshwater. A principal goal of our Renewables Program is to increase access to solar energy and to create community-based renewable energy opportunities. BEF has worked closely with utilities to develop projects and deliver energy bill savings to families who need it most. Utility regulation greatly influences these projects and the impact they have on people experiencing high energy burdens. Utility regulation determines who has access to rate structures that could benefit individuals with lower incomes, and who is at the table for regulatory processes.

BEF strongly supports HB 4067, as it brings underrepresented voices to regulatory processes and creates opportunities for reducing the energy burden of low-income ratepayers. Through our work developing low-income community solar projects, we know that people experiencing low-incomes often spend a larger percentage of their income on their energy bill compared to higher-income individuals. For these residents, a low-income discount could mean that they would be able to allocate that money towards rent, medicine, food, or other necessities. HB 4067 will give the PUC the authority to allow utilities to provide rate structures and discounts that will help reduce the energy burden of these communities. Participation in the PUC regulatory processes also requires time and resources that community-based organizations or individuals often do not have, though it is imperative that these voices are part of the decision-making processes. HB 4067 will ensure that PUC processes are more inclusive and accessible, while increasing meaningful engagement from low-income communities.

BEF supports HB 4067 and the advancement of equity in Public Utility Commission processes, and we encourage legislators to join us in our support.

Sincerely,

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