



February 19, 2020

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Legislature

RE: HB 4067 – Differential Rate PUC Bill

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members:

Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) is a non-profit association that provides training and technical assistance to Oregon's 17 Community Action agencies (CAAs) and the Oregon Human Development Corporation serving migrant farmworkers statewide. CAPO's mission is: To magnify the impact of Community Action to serve low-income Oregonians by advocating for resources with a unified voice, strengthening partnerships, and building capacity.

Together, the CAAs provide services to eradicate poverty in the state of Oregon. We work in collaboration with a variety of partners, representing local, state and federal governments, as well as community and advocacy groups, policymakers and low-income leaders.

CAPO supports HB 4067, because it would add another tool in the fight against poverty in Oregon. The Community Action Agencies spend out all of the current funding streams for energy pledges each year, and still, the need is much greater than available state and federal funds. Fixed-income seniors would benefit from a rate discount program to maintain their service through the year and ease their monthly budget. Additionally, the biggest cost-shift in utility rates is low-income ratepayers having to pay for single housing family utility infrastructure. Even providing a discount for low-income ratepayers, the utility cost-shift would still outweigh the discount for low-income households. Low-income Oregonians disproportionately live in multifamily housing, which is significantly cheaper to provide service.

CAPO runs several programs that are regulated by the commission, and this bill would be a way for CAPO to expand advocacy efforts as an intervenor, providing CAPO with increased capacity for low-income advocacy.

Sincerely,

Janet Merrell
Executive Director