



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 21, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senator Lee Beyer, Chair

Re: **HB 2475 A** – Energy Affordability – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports efforts to secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all and promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans. In particular, we support programs that help low income and at-risk people move toward financial stability.

We strongly support HB 2475 A because it would (1) make residential energy bills more affordable for the Oregonians who most need relief, and (2) bring the voices of under-represented consumers from across the state into the decision-making process for the rates, resources, and programs of investor-owned utilities.

We appreciate that the common-sense ideas in HB 2475 come from community advocates with support from PUC staff, utilities, and traditional regulatory stakeholders. We encourage the PUC to ensure community advocates are actively involved in the rulemaking process for implementing the bill.

HB 2475 is unfinished business from previous sessions and the COVID pandemic has shown how long overdue this bill is. Even before the pandemic struck, many Oregonians bore a very high energy burden (the percentage of household income spent on energy). The pandemic has worsened energy burdens as people spend more time in their homes, often because they have lost their jobs. Because these Oregonians are spending an even higher share of their resources on energy, they face even tougher budget choices and have even less money to spend at local businesses for essential goods and services.

In order to decrease the amount spent on energy, burdened households may have detrimental health impacts associated with keeping homes at lower heating temperatures or other scrimping measures which weaken respiratory health — a danger during a respiratory pandemic. In addition, energy-burdened households do not buy new appliances as frequently and are therefore not as able to decrease the amount spent on energy by taking advantage of the efficiencies in newer models.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this legislation.

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

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LWVOR Climate Emergency Portfolio