

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment.

I am in support of HB2475A as it stands without the -11 Amendment proposed because it provides an equitable process to include and respond to the needs of rate payers in Oregon. You have seen the data that confirms the energy burden suffered by many rate payers who are customers of the Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs). Although there are programs to help low income families with their utility bills, and these programs are not changed by this bill, I think is a better approach to streamline and balance the rates upfront by allowing the PUC to allow differential rates based on need.

My own case is an example. I have a need to reduce my carbon footprint and am allowed to do so by enrolling in the Blue Sky Program. Yes, I pay a bit more for that guarantee that my energy is cleanly generated. I am part of the 18% of Pacific Power customers in the state enrolled in this program. I also have a need to know that my neighbors and fellow Oregonians are not suffering and going without heat because they cannot afford it. I occasionally contribute to the assistance programs although my primary donations go to climate action, refugee, and food programs. I would be delighted to pay a few cents extra every month to know that my neighbors can have relief up front, without additional administrative costs, from their energy burden.

As we move to cleaner energy and begin building solar, wave and wind generation in earnest there will be investment costs that the PUC determines should be passed on to rate payers. We will all benefit greatly from these investments. After the initial investments the cost of the clean electricity will decrease. Without these investments we will not be able to lower our greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to bring our planet back to a healthy state. We will all benefit and we should all share the cost as we are able. Please pass HB2475 out of committee with a 'do pass' recommendation.

I oppose the proposed -11 amendment because it would limit the issues in which the new intervenor organizations could be involved. I am certain that these new intervenor groups representing low income, Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities will have innovative ideas beyond rates, and terms and conditions of service of utilities that are in the interests of consumers. I envision innovative suggestions for generation, transmission, and maximizing grid efficiency to come from these new intervenor groups. We should allow their formation and treat them as full partners.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opinions about HB2475 Affordable Energy.