

It is an honor for me to participate in your Public Hearing!

My name is Katherine Muzik. I live in Coos Bay. I write to ask for your support of Bill 2475, the Energy Affordability Act, which will bring important help to low-income families and individuals.

As a marine biologist for 50 years, and now here in Oregon as a recent climate-refugee from the tropical oceans, I understand profoundly how climate change is adversely affecting life in the seas, and as a direct consequence, all of humanity. While conducting coral reef research worldwide, I have observed and documented first-hand the colossal declines in the health of marine life, and people too. I am deeply saddened, and thus I am striving to improve the dire situation for life on our Planet.

Senator Anderson represents Coos Bay, so I am pleased to read on his legislative website that he too, is “passionate about improving our education system, housing, infrastructure, economy for our workforce and improving our healthcare system, including mental health.” Surely, energy affordability is an important part of the equation, helping to lead us to a better future. Here in rural Coos County, our residents carry a high level of energy burden. We should not have to choose between paying for food or for heat, nor to choose between paying for food or for education. Our voices, participating in energy decisions affecting us, are thus very important. Here are excerpts from the Bill, parts (4) and (5), which are pertinent :

(4) “Environmental justice” means equal protection from environmental and health hazards and meaningful public participation in decisions that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn, practice spirituality and play.

(5) “Environmental justice communities” includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, tribal communities, rural communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including but not limited to seniors, youth and persons with disabilities.

I urge you to support of Bill 2475, to help improve environmental health for all, and especially, people in need. Thank you.

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