

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy & Environment,

My name is Virginia and I live in Portland, Oregon. I urge you to vote yes on House Bill 2475 A as it currently stands and move it forward to the Senate floor with a do pass recommendation. Please do not adopt the “-A11” amendments, which would defeat a major purpose of this bill by substantially limiting intervenor funding for environmental justice stakeholders and existing Public Utility Commission intervenors like the Citizens’ Utility Board.

2020 and 2021 have brought many hardships and challenges to Oregonians, and energy burden was already a major issue before the pandemic struck. Low-income communities, especially those living in rural parts of the state as well as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, have the highest rates of energy burden in Oregon. House Bill 2475 A will allow the Public Utility Commission to adopt rate structures that help solve the issue of unaffordable energy bills while also removing barriers to communities who wish to offer input on energy decision making in Oregon.

My family got by via public assistance for many years, our home was not well insulated. The money paid for utilities impact how much food and other necessities was purchased. My single mother worked hard at her job, took in ironing and sometimes was a cook for Mexican meals at more affluent people’s parties. It was time we could not spend as a family and she lived with constant stress. We need to ensure the working poor, the unemployed have affordable energy and a voice in energy decision making.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2475 A, which passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. Please pass this bill as-is onward to the Senate floor for a vote with a do pass recommendation.

Sincerely,  
Virginia Tarango  
Portland, Oregon