



Representative Bobby Levy

Serving Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties

Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Bobby Levy and I represent House District 58. HB 2143 was requested by DEQ and Governor Brown to help raise funds for DEQ projects. However, I implore you to think critically about what this will do to some of our most vulnerable communities in Oregon.

Eastern Oregon residents who are serviced through the Hells Canyon Complex, which sits on the border of Oregon and Idaho, will see their rates nearly tripled by the consequences of these fee increases. Rural Oregonians, on average, sit below the state median income. Further, residents of rural Oregon, on average, are older than the rest of the state. Therefore, we have a situation in which a single piece of legislation can directly affect some of our eldest, low-to-fixed income residents, who simply cannot survive any sort of fee increase—especially after a year of COVID-19.

The legislation proposed in HB 2143 creates significant fee increases for companies in the relicensing process. In the state of Oregon, there is only one company that will be majorly affected by this increase this year: Idaho Power. More than doubling their current annual fee from \$296,000 to \$700,000, this increase will directly affect rate-payer's costs. Idaho Power only services 20,000 Oregonians, but it's some of the most vulnerable Oregonians in our state.

Throughout this entire pandemic, we have preached the mantra "We Are All In This Together," and that remains true to this day. But we are all in this together because industry stepped up to help make ends meet. I think I speak for everyone when I say that our utility companies have truly saved us during this pandemic. They have offered reduced rates, free services, and kept our homes heated and water flowing through the most serious days of the pandemic. As we hopefully head towards the end of COVID-19, it seems incredibly disrespectful to increase their rates with all that they've done for Oregonians throughout this last year.

I know that often our state seems to be in a fight between East and West, Urban and Rural, but I ask you today please keep in mind that we are all Oregonians.

Best,

Representative Bobby Levy, House District 58