



*From the office of*  
**REPRESENTATIVE KARIN POWER**  
**House District 41**

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Helm and Brock Smith, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Karin Power and I represent House District 41. It is my honor to bring House Bill 2475, the Energy Affordability Act, before you today.

This committee previously heard this issue in 2020 and passed it out to the House Floor, where our chamber supported the bill, 43-11.

Last February, none of us could have imagined the magnitude and impact of the coming pandemic. At the time, PGE testified in this committee that almost 1 in 5 of their residential customers had trouble paying their bills each month, and roughly 20% of their customers received bill assistance. The affordability issues were not unique to PGE; testimony in committee showed that households across the state were struggling to pay their bills.

Now, the urgency of this bill is needed more than ever.

Energy is an essential part of daily life, and we know many more Oregonians have been hit hard by the pandemic. HB 2475 will provide PUC with the authority to establish a rate class that reflects differential energy burdens and other inequities of affordability and environmental justice. This will allow the PUC to help low-income and cost-burdened Oregonians afford their energy, by creating a lower rate class or providing discounts, as many water and sewer districts already do. With one in five Oregonians experiencing food insecurity in 2020, many families need the help that will be provided by this bill.

The second facet of this bill will provide for broader engagement and greater, meaningful representation in ongoing processes at the PUC. HB 2475 expands non-state-funded resources to organizations representing ratepayers from low-income and environmental justice communities in the same manner that other customer groups currently access these funds. In total, these changes begin to implement some of the recommendations that came out of the Senate Bill 978 (2017) report.

Colleagues, HB 2475 will benefit the health and welfare of Oregonians across our districts, and I hope you will support this urgently needed bill again this year. Thank you.