

I support HB 2475 Energy Affordability Act. It will allow flexibility to ease the energy burden for low income customers. This is important to us as a community. We have learned during this time of pandemic how important it is to support all members of our community. We are also aware that clean energy is an essential goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help control climate change. During this transition there will be construction of new solar and wind generation. Some rate increase may be needed to cover the cost of initial construction. This global need should not create a burden on those already burdened by utility expenses. We should share these costs equitably.

The definition of Environmental Justice and Environmental Justice Communities in this bill is clear, comprehensive, and fair. These are the communities made up of individuals who are most impacted by energy costs and least able to retrofit their homes to decrease the amount of energy they use. I am hopeful that the groups that represent this class of customers will be able to fund energy saving retrofits and equipment to further decrease their energy burden.

I want HB2475 as a benefit to me. It hurts my heart to know there are people having to choose between warmth and food or rent. Rather than donate to relief programs, at added administrative cost, I would like to see utilities begin with the ability to be flexible in their rates. As a person breathing the one atmosphere we have I want to see a rapid shift to clean energy and I want that transition to be equitable. I know that the least expensive way to do this is to save the energy we use in our homes and buildings. If I or other customers end up paying a bit more for our electricity or methane this will provide incentives to achieve energy savings through changing our behavior and retrofitting our buildings to save energy. This is a win win for us all.

Although I am not considered low income I support this the energy Affordability Act as a benefit to all Oregon utility customers. Please pass HB2475 out of committee with a 'do pass' recommendation.