

Submitter: Jane Stackhouse

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: HB4058

I urge a YES on HB 4058 Relating to Heat Relief, Declaring an Emergency.

Last summer during the June heat dome event nearly 100 people died due to the heat . Analysis by the Medical Examiner determined factors that contributed to people's deaths. It found that most of those who died were older, lived alone and had no working air conditioning. The type of housing people lived in was also a clear factor in the danger posed by the heat: more than half of the people who died lived in apartments or multifamily units. Eight of the fatalities were people living in mobile home parks, and two were homeless, living in cars.

The heat dome is directly related to climate change, each summer being hotter than the last. Although we may not break the new record of 116 degrees in Portland this year, we must expect and plan for a recurrence. We have a responsibility to our neighbors.

HB 4058 establishes a process to get air conditioners to people who need them and provides \$5 million to fund them. This is a reasonable short-term response even though air conditioners contain hydrofluorocarbons that are an extremely potent greenhouse gas. We expect these to improve with the new EPA rules.

Therefore, I urge a small amendment to the bill. I ask for an amendment to ensure the AC units are properly maintained, including coolant upgrades according to EPA rules, and are properly recycled. Proper recycling includes capture and disposal of the hydrofluorocarbons.

I am very enthusiastic about the provisions to fund and install heat pumps for low-income households. I installed a ducted heat pump system in my owner occupied 1925 duplex. My tenant and I were comfortable indoors during the 2020 wildfire smoke and the 2021 heat dome.

Heat pump HVAC systems are electric and, as our electricity becomes cleaner, using solar and wind generation, they are the perfect alternative to using fossil fuels in our homes and businesses. Wider spread use of electric heating and cooling systems will help us stop the root cause of extreme heat dome events, too much methane and carbon in the atmosphere.

I hope you will amend to protect from hydroflurocarbon leaks and then send HB4058 on with a 'do pass' recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration

Jane Stackhouse

Foot notes

<https://www.opb.org/article/2021/08/06/oregon-june-heat-wave-deaths-names-revealed-medical-examiner/>

https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/preliminary_review-heat_deaths-07-14-21_2.pdf

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/5/4/22419429/epa-new-rules-air-conditioners-refrigerators-hfcs>