

March 1, 2023

RE: HB 3152 Oppose

From: Oregon Hearth Patio Barbecue Association

To: House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee

House Bill (HB) 3152 would require the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) to review new regulations and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions established by Governor Brown's executive order. The bill would prohibit the use of ratepayer funds to help low-income families, including low-income households with incentives or subsidies for the purchase or installation of gas appliances by residential utility customers.

Hearth appliance retailers that **sell and service home heating appliances** – are **OPPOSED**:

- This would defund the Energy Trust of Oregon and not allow incentives for installation of energy efficient gas fireplaces – or any appliance that uses natural gas for that matter.
- The bill redefines “efficiency.” Appliances that use natural gas are deemed inefficient because the energy source is a fossil fuel, not because it's actually inefficient, mechanically speaking. The PUC should not be the agency that defines efficiency.
- The bill would not allow ratepayer funds to be used to expand distribution in the state into areas that don't have gas. These areas are often lower income and rural areas.
- This fundamentally changes the PUC's mission. Should the PUC be an environmental regulations agency? That is redundant since we already have the DEQ.
- The bill defunds the use of ratepayer funds to help low-income families with the purchase or installation of gas appliances. Low-income families are more likely to live in older, lower-quality housing that is less energy-inefficient, with poor heating and home insulation.
- The bill harms historically disadvantaged populations because many of the incentive programs relate to the use of natural gas heating appliances. Native American, Black, and Hispanic households, already spend an average of between 20% and 45% more of their incomes on energy bills than white households.
- By ending these subsidies any benefits to carbon reduction that could be gained by installing more energy efficient gas appliances will be delayed for years leading to a continuation of the use of less efficient gas appliances.
- And.... For our industry specifically, this will harm our small retail businesses by lowering sales of new efficient appliances.