

PGE Support for House Bill 3016: Community Green Infrastructure

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
March 1st, 2023

PGE is a fully integrated electric utility that serves approximately 900,000 customers with a service area population of 2 million Oregonians in six counties and 51 incorporated cities. As Oregonians, we share the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and deliver to our customers a clean energy future. As we work to reduce GHG emissions from the power served to customers to meet the goals of HB 2021 (2021), we are also looking for additional ways to support our communities and reduce energy burden. Community green infrastructure programs and increased tree canopies align with those goals.

National research examining the urban heat island effect in our service territory reveals an inequitable truth. Portland neighborhoods with less canopy cover and green infrastructure have temperatures that are on average 3-5 degrees hotter than areas with more shade trees. Higher temperatures correlate to higher energy burden as residents attempt to cool their houses. Overlaying that with income data indicates this temperature disparity caused by lower canopy density primarily affects low-income residents.

We appreciate language in the bill that requires consultation with utilities when applying for the Community Green Infrastructure grants and are committed to working with bill proponents on any additional clarifications in statute. Ensuring that the right trees are planted in the right places is crucial to ensure public safety, reduce maintenance hassles, and reduce tree-related power outages.

Green infrastructure projects, as outlined in HB 3016, will help both urban and rural areas sequester carbon, mitigate heat islands, and decrease energy burdens. We support HB 3016 and urge the committee to move the bill forward.

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