



Salem Chamber

Convener | Catalyst | Champion

03/01/23

House Committee on Climate Energy and Environment

RE: Opposition to HB 3152

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs and Members of the Committee:

The Salem Chamber of Commerce believes in helping businesses prosper so our entire community may thrive. As an organization which represents over 1,100 businesses which employ 45,000 jobs in the Mid-Willamette Valley, we find that advocating for the needs of our community to be an essential part of our daily work.

Today, we are writing to this committee to express our opposition to HB 3152. Although we strongly support decarbonization and most efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we find that HB 3152, as it is currently written, will negatively impact Oregon's most vulnerable communities. The Salem Chamber estimates that HB 3152 will harm senior citizens, Oregonians who are experiencing low-income circumstances, and marginalized communities by eliminating their ability to access funding for upgrading their homes to be more energy efficient and curtail energy choice they wish to utilize. HB 3152 prohibits ratepayer funded allowances from being utilized for natural gas line extensions to residential buildings, treating gas utilities in an inconsistent manner from other energy utilities, which in turn has disparate effect on consumers.

Additionally, The Oregon PUC has historically been tasked as an economic regulator, this legislation would alter that mission to an environmental regulator. That should concern residents relying upon the PUC to focus on regulating the cost and efficiency of utilities in Oregon. We believe two energy systems are more resilient than one and support policy strategies to decarbonize both the electric and gas systems in a reliable, affordable way and in a way that preserves energy choice to meet the diverse needs for all residents and businesses—HB 3152 does not align with these goals.

The Salem Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests the committee to reconsider HB 3152 and focus on working with all energy providers and their customers to ensure they have adequate access to the most efficient equipment, sector wide, and explore efforts to achieve decarbonization with the lowest impact to financially vulnerable communities and without limiting people's energy choice.

We urge the committee to vote "NO" on this bill, preserve energy choice, protect energy resiliency in our region and redundant energy sources, encourage energy efficiency through all energy systems and focus on energy generation neutral policies to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Sincerely,

Tom Hoffert, IOM
Chief Executive Officer
Salem Chamber of Commerce

Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

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Tom Hoffert
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