



March 13, 2023

Chair Marsh and Committee Members  
House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Support of House Bill (HB) 3152, the Utility Consumer Protection Bill**

Dear Chair Marsh and Committee Members:

At the time the Public Utility Commission (PUC) and the Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) were established, it may have made sense for the mandate of such bodies to be “fuel neutral”, treating electricity, oil, and gas the same. This approach, however, no longer makes sense, and is inconsistent with the work of the legislature over the past decade to address climate change. We now know that methane, a.k.a. “natural gas,” is over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in terms of warming the climate. [See methane and climate change \(stanford.edu\).](#)

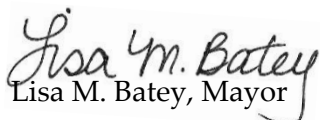
In 2020, Governor Kate Brown issued Executive Order 20-04 directing agencies to take action to reduce Oregon’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and mitigation the impacts of climate change. In response, the PUC stated that it “welcomes this direction and is well positioned to incorporate the principles and directions of EO 20-04 into our work.” [PUC: Executive Order 20-04: Utility Regulation: State of Oregon](#)

But, in fact, the PUC juggles various pieces of state policy and guidance, some of which have encapsulated this “fuel neutral” approach. Passing HB 3152 is crucial in giving the PUC and ETO clear guidance that they NO LONGER must turn a blind eye to the significant GHG emissions created by methane.

Moreover, the bill will protect ratepayers across the state from bearing the costs of gas utilities’ efforts to expand their distribution of methane gas. Contrary to the misleading statements of some opponents, HB 3152 in no way operates to ban natural gas, it merely means that local ratepayers do not have to pay to support the spread of methane pollution.

Milwaukie has a robust Climate Action Plan (thanks in large part to Rep. Mark Gamba, our former mayor). Neither our city, nor the state, will be able to achieve the reductions called for without greater regulation and accountability of methane gas, one of the greatest contributors to climate change. Passing HB 3152 is a small step in the right direction. Please move HB 3152 forward for a floor vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

  
Lisa M. Batey, Mayor

cc: Representative Mark Gamba; Senator Kathleen Taylor