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Support SB 868-871

Testimony:

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Findley and members of the Committee,

My name is Lin Reedijk and I live in Gladstone. I want the Committee to take action so all our homes and buildings are more resilient in order to protect us from climate harms. Let's make sure new construction is built smart from the start and remove barriers for Oregonians who want to improve current homes and buildings to waste less energy, protect us from climate extremes, and run on clean energy. We must prioritize helping those most harmed by climate extremes and fossil fuels. Homes and buildings are our first line of defense against climate harms, like extreme heat and wildfire smoke and the second largest source of climate pollution in Oregon. We'll gain better health, lower costs, and a safer climate by increasing climate resilience, with more insulation and sturdier windows and doors, and transitioning to clean electricity for heating and cooking. Efficient, electrical heating and cooling is growing quickly in both popularity and availability. People are rapidly moving towards heat pumps, which both heat and cool homes and buildings for lower energy costs than gas furnaces, without heating up the planet. Heat pumps will keep us cozy in winter with up to 3 times lower bills than other heating sources, and cool us in the summer too. Gas is more expensive than we can afford and the costs are skyrocketing. NW Natural Gas— the largest fossil fuel company in Oregon— increased rates more than 40% in 13 months. Meanwhile, the cost of renewable electricity, like solar and wind, is falling. Oregon needs a lot more affordable housing, and other buildings like schools and hospitals, for our growing population. These should all be built smart from the start, healthier and more resilient against growing climate harms. Our first step should be to stop making the problem worse. It's more affordable to build all-electric with heat pumps, and more affordable to live and work in homes and buildings that waste less energy. Burning methane "natural" gas in our homes & buildings is bad for our health, our wallets, and our climate. It's time for a transition. Methane is a fossil fuel. Burning it for heat and cooking is dangerously warming the climate and pumping air pollution into our communities, including inside homes, workplaces, schools, daycare and other places we spend our time.