



Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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March 29, 2023

To: Senator Woods, Representative Gomberg, and members of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

From: Bob Jenks, Executive Director and Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy Manager, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

Re: Support for SB 5534 – Oregon Public Utility Commission's Biennial Budget

The Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) is a statewide nonprofit consumer advocacy organization developed by citizens' initiative in 1984. CUB represents the interests of Oregon households by advocating for utility regulations and policies that protect your wallet. To date, we have saved Oregon ratepayers \$9.4 billion. CUB is pleased to support SB 5534, the Oregon Public Utility Commission's (PUC) budget bill. The PUC's primary obligation is to protect customers of monopoly utilities. They take this responsibility seriously and ratepayers benefit from providing this agency the resources necessary to meet this critical obligation.

We believe the budget outlined in the PUC's budget request is reasonable and will provide the PUC with the resources it needs to meet its ongoing and growing obligations. On top of the numerous ratemaking proceedings the PUC oversees, these obligations include what the PUC has been tasked with by the Legislature in recent years related to decarbonization and energy affordability. The PUC has taken on a big task in implementing HB 2021 (electricity clean energy plan bill) and other energy-related bills like the important work being done in HB 2475 (the Energy Affordability Act). The PUC has already enhanced the HB 2021 implementation process by contracting to receive assistance on complex issues beyond the current PUC staff's expertise, like energy resilience and reliability. We believe additional staff and technical assistance will continue to help the PUC and interested stakeholders have a more robust and efficient process.

These bills' directives are ambitious, bold, and important. They also require a lot of work. It is important that the PUC have adequate funding to meet the Legislature's directives. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the PUC's Biennial Budget.