

Monday, February 10th 2025

To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Subject: Support for SB 685

Dear Chair Sollman , Vice Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (Oregon PSR) is an organization of over 2,000 health professionals and public health advocates working to address the gravest threats to human health and survival. In Oregon, for profit gas companies are blending hydrogen with methane gas without any oversight, posing great risks to human health and safety. Today we are submitting testimony in support of SB 685. This bill will provide much needed oversight and public notice of blending hydrogen into natural gas residential pipelines. SB 685 also protects public health and safety by requiring utilities to inform local governments about hydrogen blending, allowing fire and health departments to prepare adequately to respond to possible accidents.

Hydrogen has smaller molecules and higher flammability that make it dangerous. For this reason, hydrogen ignites more easily and is more explosive than methane. This increases the danger of possible explosions in buildings and homes. A study from Stanford University found that methane leaks inside residential and commercial buildings when appliances are in use and when they are turned off. Hydrogen could also make these leaks more dangerous.

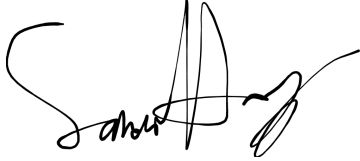
Moreover, the American Medical Association (AMA) recognizes the dangers of blending hydrogen and “natural” gas. The AMA notes that burning hydrogen may lead to more emissions of nitrogen oxides, raising risks of respiratory diseases. While hydrogen blends up to 5% are generally safe, higher percentage blends added to the natural gas stream result in a greater risk of pipeline leaks, embrittlement of pipelines, stove and water heater malfunctions, and potential explosions, according to the University of California at Riverside Hydrogen Blending Impacts Study.

Oregon PSR strongly urges you to protect the health and safety of customers by supporting SB 685.



OREGON 
PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Sincerely,



Samantha Hernandez

Healthy Climate Program Director

