



# Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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February 13, 2025

To: Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Levy, Vice-Chair Gamba, and members of the House Climate on Climate, Energy, and Environment

From: Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy & Program Director, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB)

Re: Support for HB 2567 – Oregon Heat Pump Programs

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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 over \$10 billion. **We ask that you support HB 2567 – Oregon Heat Pump Programs** which provide critical money-saving and potentially life-saving systems for our most vulnerable neighbors.

CUB has supported this Oregon Department of Energy program since its inception in 2022. Oregon summers are growing increasingly hotter and heat waves are more and more common. This program not only helps Oregon residents access lifesaving, energy-efficient cooling systems, but it does so specifically for those who cannot afford to do it on their own. We know energy utility costs can create financial hardships for households, particularly our vulnerable neighbors that are low-income, elderly, and with disabilities. This is especially true during extreme weather events which often necessitate increased energy usage, leading to sharp increases in residential utility bills.

CUB supports HB 2567 because this legislation will help Oregon residents reduce energy costs with energy-efficient cooling systems. High efficiency heating/cooling systems, like heat pumps, can keep Oregonians safe and healthy while saving on their utility bills. Heat pumps are highly energy-efficient alternatives to furnaces and air conditioners. For example, manufactured homes often use energy intensive (and expensive) electric resistance heating. Replacing heat systems with heat pumps can cut up to 50% of a household's electricity use. CUB supports investing in energy efficiency because the cheapest energy dollar is the one you do not have to spend. In addition, efficient equipment reduces the need for the utility to acquire resources, resulting in savings for all customers. Notably, the Oregon Rental Heat Pump Program addresses a notable gap in support for renters. If a family cannot pay their utility bill, they're more than likely struggling with paying their rent. In a state with a prolonged housing crisis, this support absolutely keeps our neighbors in their homes and with their lights on.

While saving money is important, it is not CUB's only concern. Access to air conditioning at home can be a lifesaving measure. HB 2567 makes heat pumps more accessible to low-income Oregonians, leaving them better prepared for extreme weather events and with lower energy bills. This legislation shows that Oregon is prepared to keep our most vulnerable neighbors safe with energy-efficient options that maintain healthy temperature in homes while keeping utility costs low. CUB supports and urges a "yes" vote on HB 2567.