

Submitter: Miss Jan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3179

Me: elderly, new health issues, fixed retirement income, long-term renter of small house in Lane County. Utility: EPUD, allegedly non-profit, behaves like a profit predator. It is unreasonably expensive (not affordable even when I was still working). Switched to smart metering immediately resulting in a sharp rise in already unaffordable bills. Since April 2024 I've kept a DAILY LOG of my actual use habits, including EXTREME measures taken to reduce usage, yet there is little reflection in the bill. Extreme measures include keeping the house too cold for my health issues; using flashlights where possible (and never having any lights on in daylight hours), cold meals 2-3x daily so as not to use stove or oven, cutting back to once weekly showers and laundry, using disposable paper plates and plastic utensils – saves on hot water use. IMO EPUD is including in what it charges customers such things as funding lobbyists, funneling its own taxes owed through to customers, and unreasonable compensation and percs for its administrators. Just WHO is programming the utility's 'smart meter' computers using WHAT algorithms – specifically disguising how it enhances income! EPUD's bills are also confusing/hard to understand, especially for a customer trying to monitor use. EPUD doesn't offer tiered usage rates such as discounting kw cost for off-peak use. EPUD's customer service personnel are often under- or completely ill-informed; for example – I am a renter, which they know -- EPUD told me I “need to upgrade heating and insulation with a new heat pump, window replacement, and improved insulation,” failing to comprehend that as a renter I not only could never afford these upgrades, but property improvement by a licensed contractor requires permission of the property OWNER (e.g., LANDLORD). Ageist-type remarks by staff blaming ME in discussing usage, including stating such things as “your furnace is running you just aren't hearing it” (when the unit was OFF at the switchbox and most definitely NOT “running” – and just by the way, I'm NOT hard of hearing! Maybe worse was difficulty getting assistance with the bill EVEN FROM EPUD's OWN PROGRAM – EPUD employees seemingly knowing zero about EPUD's own program ERAP, why? Because EPUD pays Lane County to administer it! All adds up to management behaving AS IF for PROFIT even though EPUD “claims” to be “not for profit”!