

TO: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
RE: Support of SB 88 Get the Junk Out of Rates Bill
DATE: February 28, 2025

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and members of the Energy and Environment Committee,

I am Mairi Parsons, and I live in our state capital, Salem, Oregon. I strongly support SB 88, which will save Oregon ratepayers from shouldering the cost of a utility's political lobbying, advertising, and industry association fees. I pay electricity and natural gas bills in Salem and **demand fairness and transparency** for my fellow Oregonians.

- **We are tightening our belts because of inflation and higher utility bills and the utility companies should do the same.** The average retail price of electricity for residents has increased by around 30% in the past four years, 9% higher than the nation, according to the [Oregon Department of Energy](#). My stove is powered by NW Natural Gas, who raised prices by 4.5% starting October of last year (luckily the increase was not 18%, as they initially requested).
A 2024 State Of The State's Housing [report](#) by the Oregon Housing and Community Service found that "energy insecurity—struggling to meet basic heating, cooling, and energy needs—can lead to housing instability". And, **low-income households spend more of their income on energy and face higher energy costs, all while facing a higher energy burden than middle and high-income households.** Low-income households, "pay an average of \$2,300 annually in electricity bills, compared to \$1,900 for the average household regardless of income."
- **Fees, lobbying, and advertising should come out of their profits, not our wallets.** I do not want to pay for my utility company's fees, which are non-essential for providing reliable, affordable, safe, and renewable energy to their customers. It especially makes no sense for me to support their lobbying fees, when their political interests do not align with my own values of clean energy against fossil fuel usage.
- **A bill should tell you what you are paying for, and we assume they do.** Utility companies should have to be transparent about what they are charging us. I have a right to know if my money is going towards something other than powering my apartment.

Lowering utility bills is urgent! It means that people can stay in their homes. The Governor's priority is affordable housing and getting the junk out of rates should be a part of that. **Getting junk out of rates is not a luxury, it's a lifeline.** I urge you to support SB 88 and take action immediately.

Sincerely,
Mairi Parsons
Salem, Oregon