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On Behalf Of:
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Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3546

This is the second time I have ever submitted testimony of any kind, but the issue of utility pricing has become a serious issue to myself and to many others. My husband is 83 and I am 74 so we are well into our senior years - we are on a fixed income that has not kept pace with the inflation over the past four years. It is most apparent in our electricity bill from PGE. We have heated our home with wood burning stove the majority of the time. But as it is becoming more scarce and expensive to get wood, and my husband at 83 shouldn't have to go out a cut wood. We began using our electric heat more in 2022 but the bill jumped to over \$400 per month. We can't afford that. In 2023, we did not turn on our heat and I WORE MY WINTER COAT IN MY HOUSE TO STAY WARM. The bill was around \$200 or less. In 2024, we again, rarely turned on the heat and never above 65 degrees, and the bill remained below \$300... now 2024 - November \$154, December (we were gone and had to leave the heat on 3 days)\$309, January \$296, and now February \$465.49. I put out a question on Nextdoor website if anyone else was experiencing such high bills for PGE. I thought maybe the high price was our problem but as of now with over 185 conversations this problem is all over the valley. Some people are paying over \$1000, many have experienced obscene increases, one person says she feels like she is being pushed out of their home. The pricing affects homes that are single wide trailers or 2000 sq feet homes and everything in between. This bill, as much as I can understand, might help somewhat to curb the continuous rate increases that are making PGE unaffordable for many people. When I see the millions of dollars in salary that the President/CEO and the five VPs made in 2023 off of the back of ordinary citizens trying to just stay warm - or cool in the summer - well, I am dumbfounded. PGE is NOT affordable. We have energy efficient appliances, double siding on the house, double pane windows, all LED lighting (which I hate), new flooring, etc. and yet I can't afford to turn on the heat in my own house. The economic impact of proposed rate hikes are decimating peoples income and/or savings. PGE raised prices in 2024 over 18% and then again in January of 2025 5.5% - disgusting. I support anything that will reign in the utility companies from what I view is price gauging. Water, food, and electricity are fundamental necessities of living which affects the health and well-being of all men, women, children, but un-affordability is crushing people. Hopefully, this is a first step in changing that trajectory.