



Please Oppose HB 4080

The Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers (OSAEW) & the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council **urge your opposition to House Bill 4080.**

We agree that diverse energy options – including solar technology is critical, however, this bill presents significant safety issues and are a **legitimate risk to public safety**. We appreciate the chief sponsor listening to our concerns, and we have proposed options to work together to have safe and sound installations of plug-in solar systems moving forward. Nevertheless, despite many conversations, our concerns have not been addressed in the proposed legislation. Large loopholes around the installation, inspection, and maintenance of potential Balcony Solar Units still exist.

Additionally, the OSAEW and Firefighters fundamentally oppose the practice of placing codes decisions like this in Statute, *particularly* in cases where the proposed system has not been approved through a single U.S. safety or code standard.

We do not support passing statute over ensuring safety.

Nor do we support the promotion of business interests over human lives.

The public safety concerns that exist with broad access to this technology are plentiful, and the bill does not ensure safe installation, maintenance, nor inspection standards for a “plug and play” power generation device.

This is a dangerous precedent that leaves installation of an experimental power generation system up to unlicensed consumers. Some of these risks include:

- Installation into an incorrect outlet;
- Stringing together of multiple generation units, and plugging into an inappropriate outlet;
- Improper installation that blocks egress in the case of a fire;
- Blocking entrance to a building by fire fighters attempting rescues or extinguishment
- Incorrect installation of a panel to a balcony;
- Inability to “shut off” adjoining systems in the event of fire

This bill and current risks with the proposed technology not only increase the risk of electrical fires in multifamily housing, but potentially decrease the ability of individuals to exit their homes in the case of a fire.

Beyond the maintenance and installation issues, the OSAEW has noted an overarching concern with plug in generation of power. The risks of overloading a circuit, and of breakers not triggering are problematic at best and dangerous at worst. There are risks if key safety components on this technology fail – such as the ‘anti-islanding’ technology – that can create hot systems or lines that pose danger to workers and residents. Washington State recently considered a similar bill and elected not to move it forward, given the unknowns, safety risks, and lack of regular process for the technology.

In addition to safety concerns, our state has a stated priority of building affordable, multifamily housing. Building housing that can then be modified by an occupant in a manner that may increase a risk of fire is not incentivizing nor affordable. We agree the cost of energy is going up, and that overall affordability is problematic. The energy offset that these systems provide Oregon residents is minimal. The financial costs of safely installing the technology is not determined due to lack of NEC code compliance or UL certification as a worthwhile device. There are too many unknowns from a safety and practicality standpoint to move this bill in the process.

As the safety and industry experts in our fields, **we urge opposition to House Bill 4080**. We look forward to revisiting the subject in collaboration with the Chief Sponsor. Once the technology has gone through UL safety and certification processes, we can work through the Fire Code access issues we discussed above to achieve a safe and practical use of alternative energy in multi-family housing.

Thank you for your consideration of the viewpoints of **electrical workers and your fire fighters**.

Please vote no on House Bill 4080.