



**AWEC**

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January 30, 2019

Senator Manning and Representative Gomberg  
Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Senator Manning and Representative Gomberg,

I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 5534 and the Oregon Public Utility Commission's (PUC) request for a fee increase to support new staff positions.

The Alliance of Western Energy Consumers (AWEC) is a non-profit organization comprised of some of the largest, most innovative and trusted employers in the West. AWEC provides a strong advocacy voice in shaping the dynamics of energy markets, natural gas markets, and regulatory policy. Our members provide tens of thousands of highly paid technical jobs. AWEC has a large and diversified base of members that represent industries such as agriculture, aeronautics, air products, pulp and paper, food processing, informational technology, healthcare and more.

Senate Bill 5534 would modify ORS 756.310 by increasing the annual utility fee. The increase would give the PUC flexibility to raise the fee from .30 percent up to .45 percent. Given the increasing complexity of utility regulation, we believe this increase is necessary in order for the PUC to adequately address staffing levels that are critical to the work they do.

New funding would allow the PUC to make investments to meet new legislative requirements and allow the PUC to meet their 2018 strategic plan with additional staffing in the Utility Program and Commission office. Passage of SB 5534 would help ensure that the PUC has enough funding to meet obligations beyond 2023.

We would encourage you to support Senate Bill 5534. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

John Carr  
AWEC  
Executive Director