



March 11th, 2019

To: Representative Keny-Guyer and members of the House Human Services and Housing Committee
From: Jaimes Valdez, Policy Manager, Spark Northwest
RE: Letter in Support of HB 2802, Healthy Homes Repair and Rehabilitation Program

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the House Human Services and Housing Committee,

As a regional nonprofit organization focused on helping communities engage in locally-controlled clean energy, we are pleased to support HB 2802. Over the past 16 years, Spark Northwest (formerly named Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development) has helped residential customers Oregon make the switch to solar energy, wind power, and energy efficient equipment. Through education and technical assistance, we provide tools for people of all income levels to lower their energy costs and invest in their communities.

Over the past few years, we have worked with communities in southern Oregon to improve their homes through installation of energy efficient heat pumps. Through our Energize Rogue program, we partnered with local community organizations to deploy more efficient heating and cooling technology to hundreds of Oregonians. In order for energy efficiency programs to reach their full potential, people often need to first make critical home repairs to ensure that air and water are not getting into the structure. These improvements are often costly, and out of reach of low-income households. In addition, leaky inefficient homes often lead to drafty, wet conditions which can cause mold formation, leading to negative health outcomes. Children and seniors are particularly sensitive to indoor air quality issues, and impacts of treating diseases such as asthma lead to missed school days and additional health care expenditures.

HB 2802 provides needed grant funds for the renovation and improvement of homes for low-income Oregonians, preserving the stock of affordable housing and helping prevent displacement. In addition, these grants will extend the life of existing and future energy efficiency measures, reducing household energy expenses and leading to positive health outcomes for people living in those structures. The grant program created through HB 2802 is available statewide, and fills a needed gap especially for people living in rural parts of Oregon that do not have access to the programs from the Energy Trust of Oregon. It provides mechanisms for reporting and effective outreach and deployment through partnership with Community Action Agencies. This program will have a meaningful and tangible positive impact on the lives of vulnerable Oregonians, and we are proud to support this bill.

We encourage you to pass HB 2802 through committee, appreciate your consideration of these issues, and look forward to remaining engaged in this process.

Sincerely,

Jaimes Valdez

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