



April 2, 2019

To: Chair Helm and Members of the House Energy & Environment Committee  
From: Jaimes Valdez, Policy Manager, Spark Northwest  
RE: Letter in Support of HB 3094, Home WRAP

Dear Chair Helm and members of the House Committee on Energy & the Environment,

As a regional nonprofit organization focused on helping communities engage in locally-controlled clean energy, we are pleased to support HB 3094, the Home Weatherization, Retrofit and Affordability Program. Over the past 16 years, Spark Northwest (formerly named Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development) has helped residential customers and small agricultural producers in 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. In particular, over the past three years we have deployed community-based education, contractor training, and group purchase programs for energy efficient equipment in rural areas. Our most recent Energize Rogue project partnered with local nonprofits in Jackson, Douglas, and Josephine Counties to install efficient ductless heat pumps in over 180 households. This project also yielded significant health and livability co-benefits for those residents, as the area suffered wildfires in the summer of 2018, and heat pumps provide cool, filtered air to occupants. Approximately 500 people attended workshops held throughout the community, and there was additional education about ways that people can save money and reduce energy use.

HB 3094 provides a needed tool to reduce the cost of energy efficient equipment and retrofits, and creates an incentive structure that is different than the previous Residential Energy Tax Credit program. Incentives are necessary at this point to make many projects economical feasible, especially for lower income Oregonians. Energy efficiency improvements have capital costs up front, and yield savings over time. In parts of Oregon there are incentives from Energy Trust of Oregon to reduce up-front costs, but these are only available in certain utility territories. We had planned to expand our “Energize” program to additional communities on the Oregon Coast and in the Klamath Falls area, but uncertainty about the incentive program has led us to pause those efforts. There are good jobs in energy efficiency, and we want to ensure that this vital industry continues to thrive. It is also critical that low-income rural Oregonians have equitable opportunities for energy savings.

We support the Home WRAP bill, and it creates a clear, accountable program that will provide multiple benefits to the state, including energy savings, contribution towards climate goals, economic development, and positive health outcomes. This is an opportunity to create program that will directly help people’s quality of life.

We encourage you to pass HB 3094 through committee, appreciate your consideration of these issues, and look forward to remaining engaged in this process.

Sincerely,

Jaimes Valdez

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