

February 3, 2020

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Dear Chair Power, Vice-Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Reschke and members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment,

On behalf of New Buildings Institute, I am writing to express support for HB 4067.

NBI is national non-profit with the vision of a transformed built environment that is carbon-free, energy-efficient and supports thriving economies that benefit all. We do this through technical research on buildings, a comprehensive understanding of residential and commercial building markets, promotion of best practices in sustainable, high performance buildings, and development of energy codes and policies at the local, state and national level.

HB4067 follows up on the Oregon Public Utility Commission process instigated by SB 978, which resulted in suggestions of increase focus on carbon and environmental justice in PUC activities. HB4067 gives the PUC authority to provide rate designs that reduce energy burden for low-income or underserved customers. HB4067 will also give environmental justice communities greater ability to participate in the regulatory process, in the way that CUB does. Adding voices in this process is one step toward unraveling inherent unjustness in the current regulatory framework.

We understand how technical and challenging energy policy can be. Participation in regulatory processes takes time, research, and consultation with experts in order to have an impact on policy. This is challenge even for technical non-profits like ours that has worked in the utility, energy efficiency sector for over 20 years. Citizens and groups representing communities of color are already stretched thin and under-resourced. They do not have the means to get to and from Salem.

In the past few years NBI has had an awakening to the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in our work. We now see the inequities that are sometimes embedded in the program. More voices in the process will help uncover these challenges and help to address them before actions that may be inequitable are final.

We encourage you to support HB 4067. It is an important step on the long road to an equitable future.

Sincerely,



Amy Cortese
Program Director