



# Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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**Testimony of Samuel Pastrick  
Regarding HB 2475 - Oregon Energy Affordability Act  
Before the House Committee on Energy & Environment**

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Brock-Smith and Helm, members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Samuel Pastrick. I'm the Advocacy and Development Manager at Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB). CUB is a membership-based 501(c)3 nonprofit consumer advocacy organization that represents and advocates for the broad interests of residential energy and telecommunications utility customers. I am pleased to submit the following testimony in support of HB 2475 (the Oregon Energy Affordability Act) and encourage the Committee's swift movement toward passage.

HB 2475 has two important policy goals:

1. Improve the affordability of energy services for residential customers with low incomes
2. Improve the participation capacity of underrepresented communities before the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC).

HB 2475 understands that mitigating the energy burdens faced by residential customers - particularly those with low incomes - requires empowering the PUC and community based organizations.

In terms of empowering community based organizations: HB 2475 would help to facilitate participation and advocacy in PUC public processes from customer groups representing the broad interests of environmental justice communities.

The bill would do so by simply authorizing the PUC to consider what are called “intervenor funding” agreements among regulated energy utilities and these environmental justice advocates.

The agreements could be similar to the ones CUB, as an advocate for residential utility customers, and the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers, as an advocate for large industrial utility customers, currently have with these same utilities to help offset the costs associated with practicing before the PUC in what are often complicated and time intensive legal proceedings.

In terms of empowering the PUC: HB 2475 could help to encourage regulated energy utilities to reduce the energy burden of their residential customers by simply acknowledging income within the context of both rate design (e.g. discount for customers with low incomes) and program development (e.g. subsidized smart thermostats or other grid-connected equipment for customers with low incomes).

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores this last point because tens-of-thousands of Oregonians remain out of work and unable to afford their household bills.

Last September, the PUC’s COVID-19 Customer Impact Order ensured critical protections for residential energy utility customers. But in the 10 months since the energy service disconnection moratorium went into effect, past due balances for residential customers have sky-rocketed.

The PUC’s consideration of income in both rate design and program development would represent an essential step for the PUC, as an economic regulator, to help protect residential customers as Oregon continues to recover from a once-in-a-century crisis.

Once again, CUB is proud to support and will continue to advocate for HB 2475. We encourage the Committee’s support, and I am happy to answer questions.

Respectfully,

Samuel Pastrick / [samuel@oregoncub.org](mailto:samuel@oregoncub.org)