

Testimony in support of HB 2475
Mirinda Hart, Douglas County, OR

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, Vice-Chair Helm and members of the committee,

Greetings, my name is Mirinda Hart, I live in Douglas County and I am writing today in support of HB 2475.

Things like heat, electricity, and hot water should not be luxuries. However, in the colder months for many Oregonians they become exactly that. Between the need to use more energy and increasing costs it becomes necessary to prioritize → food or heat. Rent or lights. This situation is not conducive to mental health, physical health, or productivity and it is the exact situation many Oregonians, from young to elderly, face.

HB 2475 would lessen this burden for our community members hit hardest by these struggles, by enacting lower rates for lower incomes.

The current structure, based on usage, ignores obstacles many low income folks face. We, simply, cannot afford to upgrade our homes, assistance isn't available in our area, and programs confusing to obtain. Our insulation may be shoddy, our windows old, we may have a leak or two that we have to put off because between all the bills plus \$400/month for electricity, things are tight. I, myself, live in an older manufactured home, the examples I just gave are my own. I don't have a lot of money, I try to keep my heater down to save on the bill, but even at a consistent 66-68 degrees I shiver all winter and my bill is roughly \$400/month.

By providing lower rates for lower income folks HB 2475 not only eases the burden of food vs heat and pay out the nose to freeze, it may also allow folks, like me, to save a little money to invest in insulation upgrades and what not. Thus, decreasing my usage over time.

HB 2475 also allows organizations who represent the most impacted communities (rural, People of Color, Indigenous, low income, etc.) to better participate in decision making. This is huge for me, personally. In my area there is a lot of resistance to "Salem," primarily because they don't feel heard. When these organizations, who work with communities like mine and others, have fuller participation in decisions about energy, communities' issues get heard and they, not only, feel more represented, They are.

Thank you so much Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, Vice-Chair Helm and members of the Committee, not only for your time, but also for supporting Energy Affordability, HB 2475.

Sincerely,
Mirinda L. Hart.