



February 1, 2021

Representative Pam Marsh, Chair
House Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2475 - SUPPORT

Chair Power and Members of the Committee,

We write in strong support of HB 2475. Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis.

We participated in the Public Utility Commission (PUC) process implementing Senate Bill 978 from the 2018 session. SB 978 recognized that there is a sea change occurring in the electricity sector caused by industry trends, technologies, and policy drivers including the significant shift from fossil fuel generation like fossil gas and coal, to renewable energy. Accordingly, SB 978 directed the PUC to conduct a public process exploring how investor-owned utilities are regulated and can adapt to these significant changes.

The public process that wrapped up 2 years ago identified as its two top priorities: (1) the need for the PUC to better integrate greenhouse gas reduction considerations into decision-making and make decisions based on the imperatives of climate change, and (2) the need to better support equitable outcomes for all customers and hear from environmental justice and low income customer advocates in PUC proceedings. HB 2475 addresses that latter issue head-on.

HB 2475 would provide more authority to the PUC to provide rate designs, such as discounts, that protect low income customers, as well as provide more resources and financial support for advocates for environmental justice and low income customers to meaningfully participate and advocate in PUC proceedings. These changes would improve the PUC process and better support low income and environmental justice communities.

More than ever, as more Oregonians struggle to afford energy bills, protections should be put in place now to keep energy bills stable and affordable. Additionally, with major, albeit necessary, changes on the horizon for utilities to rapidly decarbonize, serve more load from electrified transportation & appliances, regionalize, and shift to enable greater distributed generation in communities, giving the PUC new tools to provide protective, flexible rate structures for low income customers also helps ensure a more equitable transition to clean energy over time.

Please vote "yes" on HB 2475! Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meredith Connolly".

Meredith Connolly
Oregon Director