

January 31, 2021

To: House Energy and Environment Committee

Re: Oregon House Bill 2475

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

My name is Richard Warren Scott, I live in Union County, and I am a progressive Eastern Oregonian. I was born and raised in La Grande, graduated from La Grande High School, and received a BA from Eastern Oregon University. I am writing you today to voice my support of HB 2475.

I'm sure you are aware of the large urban-rural divide in our state and that constituents in Eastern Oregon feel ignored and forgotten by our lawmakers in Salem. HB 2475 is an opportunity to chip away at those sentiments by providing some much-needed financial relief. According to the Biennial Energy Report published by the Oregon Department of Energy, Union County is very energy burdened. As of November 2020, 30% of our households pay 6% or more of their income on energy costs. On this side of the Cascades, our winters are bitterly cold and our summers are blisteringly hot. Over three-quarters of our housing was built before 1990, meaning that most homes are not sufficiently insulated to withstand our unforgiving extreme temperatures. We must run our heaters and air conditioners more days and at higher intensities than in other parts of the state in order to thrive. I have shivered through dark winters wearing three pairs of socks to bed, unable to pay expensive energy bills while working a full-time minimum-wage job that I was lucky to find in our shallow and stagnant job market.

HB 2475 would help us afford our energy bills by giving the PUC the authority to allow utilities to design rates that take into account the high energy burden prevalent in low-income Eastern Oregon. HB 2475 would also increase participation in regulatory processes by organizations that represent the frontline needs of Eastern Oregon. Take a look at the "Energy Burden by County" map in the Biennial Energy Report and you will see the dire need in Eastern Oregon for HB 2475. Please don't forget about us. Please don't ignore our shivering. Thank you Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, Vice-Chair Helm and members of the Committee for supporting Energy Affordability, HB 2475.

Sincerely,

Richard Warren Scott