



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 102-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

February 2, 2022

To: [House Environment and Natural Resources Committee](#)  
Representative Pam Marsh, Chair

Re: [HB 4058](#)– Emergency Heat Relief for Communities - **SUPPORT**

Because the League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and planet, LWVOR supports climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations. The League also has strong positions on air quality, land use, water quality, protecting our coastal resources, public health and others related to the various state agencies' work on climate. We follow the state budget and support investments that would implement the proposals contained in this legislation.

It is obvious that climate change is going to cause more extreme climate events such as the “heat dome,” which caused many deaths and the ice storm with extremely low temperatures. Now is the time for Oregon to help its residents adapt to these extremes; HB 4058 is a good start in that direction.

### **Healthy Homes**

We support the addition of “Electrical upgrades that improve the safety of the home or support or enable the use of energy efficiency upgrades.” to the Healthy Homes Program.

### **Heat Pump Deployment Program**

We enthusiastically support the Program as a way to make permanent adaptations for both hot and cold extremes resulting from climate change, since heat pumps will provide both heating and cooling. We approve of the appropriation of \$10 million to get the program into operation quickly.

We appreciate that the recognized Indian tribes are included as an integral part of the program and members of environmental justice communities are prioritized. Prioritizing those relying on bulk fuels or electrical resistance heating will help accomplish the greenhouse gas emissions reductions required by the passage of HB 202 (2021) and the adoption of the Climate Protection Program. Of course, we agree that those not having any heating or cooling should be prioritized.

We are aware that there are other programs satisfying some of the same goals. Therefore, we appreciate that the State Department of Energy is required to consult with other bureaus and departments, including ensuring the program “complements any existing programs or services,” as well as consulting with “nonprofit organizations, housing providers, heat pump technicians, and other stakeholders”.

**Measures to Address Higher Utility Bills**

We recognize that the increased energy costs resulting from the extreme events can be a problem for people whose energy burden may already be high. We agree with allowing the Public Utility Commission the ability to merge this response with other measures or programs they have previously adopted. **We would like to see a requirement that those who are most likely to be affected are notified in advance of the availability of assistance so they don't avoid using their heating or cooling.**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



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