



March 13, 2023

House Committee on Climate Energy and Environment
Honorable Chair Rep. Pam Marsh
Honorable Vice Chair Rep. Bobby Levy
Honorable Vice Chair Rep. Emerson Levy
RE: Testimony opposing HB 3152

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Levy and Levy, and Members of the Committee:

The Portland Business Alliance (the Alliance) is greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce and represents the largest, most diverse network of businesses in the region. The Alliance advocates for business at all levels of government to support commerce, community health, and the region's overall prosperity. We represent over 2,100 members, from 27 counties, 14 states, and virtually every industry sector. More than 80% of our members are small businesses.

I am writing today to express the Alliance's opposition to HB 3152.

The Alliance recognizes the critical challenges posed by the growing impacts of climate change. We support policies that promote collaboration with the private sector to innovate and invest in clean technologies that will accelerate reductions in carbon emissions and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. However, in our view, HB 3152 is unnecessary and could have numerous unintended harmful consequences for our residents and overall economy.

We are deeply concerned that this bill would negatively impact the very communities we are working to empower as we recover from the pandemic. Seniors, low-income residents, and historically disadvantaged populations would lose energy choice and their ability to improve energy efficiency. HB 3152 would essentially cut off these vulnerable families and households' ability to access available funds to upgrade, improve or replace aging appliances, solely based on energy type, with no thought to cost, reliability, or real reductions in emissions.

Healthy communities need reliable, affordable energy and the policy outlined in this bill would raise energy costs on both systems for no definable benefit, and sacrifice resiliency that two well-maintained energy systems provide.

In our view HB 3152 would increase economic inequities by denying energy choice and eliminating options for low-income Oregonians that the affluent would still have access to. If low-income families desired a natural gas choice, it would no longer be available to them thus penalizing them for their economic circumstances.

This bill also would begin a very concerning shift away from the Oregon PUC serving as our primary regulator of energy economics to an environmental regulator with no concern for economic fairness or the overall health of our economy. One of Oregon's greatest economic advantages is our low energy costs. This has been successfully managed and maintained by the Oregon PUC for decades. By beginning to chip away at that mission we are concerned that this bill will exacerbate Oregon's rising cost of living by making it even less affordable for the most vulnerable Oregonians and weaken one of our most important economic strengths.

For these reasons we urge the committee to vote no on HB 3152. Thank you.

Jon Isaacs (*he/him*)

Vice President, Public Affairs

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