



NW Energy Coalition Supports HB 3143

Utilities are responding to a variety of extreme weather events, disasters and other declared emergencies. As an example, from mid-2020 to early 2021, utilities dealt with a crippling heat waves, multiple wildfires, and snow and ice storms. Recovering from those events and rebuilding the electrical system from damage incurred from these extreme events can be expensive and definitely impact rates.

Even worse, these are unplanned expenses since they are, by definition, emergencies. Of course, you can try to anticipate the unexpected but expenses cannot be put into rates until they are actually made.

HB 3143 allows the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) to approve a request from a utility to issue bonds to pay for expenses needed to recover from extreme circumstances. The authority is very limited – only in response to emergencies that are officially declared by state or federal government officials.

The bill is beneficial because:

- It allows for expenses related to declared emergencies over longer periods of time, helping to keep rates at a reasonable level.
- While the request to issue bonds can only be done in response to expenses incurred from a declared emergency, the Oregon PUC retains the discretion over whether to authorize the bond issuance.
- It is aligned with similar policy and authority in place for utilities in other states so the bond markets are familiar with this type of bond issuance.
- It is limited and targeted and helps utilities serve their customers and help them manage their utility bills.

NW Energy Coalition supports HB 3143 and urges legislators to approve this proposal.