

## **HB 3792 -4 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

### **House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection**

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**Meeting Dates:** 3/27, 4/8

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#### **WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

The measure requires the Public Utility Commission to study consumer protection for utility ratepayers.

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- The cap on per site customer payments to the Housing and Community Services Department Low Income Electric Bill Payment Assistance Fund
- Rising utility costs
- Alternative approaches to funding the Housing and Community Services Department Low Income Electric Bill Payment Assistance Fund
- The quality of housing

#### **EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

-4 The amendment increases the amount required to be collected by electric companies from at least \$20 million to at least \$40 million to be placed into the Housing and Community Services Department Low Income Electric Bill Payment Assistance Fund. The amendment requires the Public Utility Commission to reassess this figure every two years and may increase the amount. If the amount is increased by more than 2.5 percent the commission must report to the legislative assembly within 30 days. the amendment would increase the cap that an electric company may collect from a single customer site from \$500 to \$1,000 per month.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Public Utility Commission (PUC) is responsible for rate regulation of Oregon's investor-owned electric utilities, natural gas utilities, telephone service providers (landline only), as well as select water companies. The PUC also enforces electric and natural gas safety standards and handles utility-related dispute resolution on behalf of Oregon residents.

The Housing and Community Services Department Low-Income Electric Bill Payment Assistance Fund is established in the State Treasury, separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Housing and Community Services Department Low-Income Electric Bill Payment Assistance Fund shall be credited to the fund. Moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the Housing and Community Services Department for purposes described in ORS 757.698.