

Submitter: Betsy Toll

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB685

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for SB685, the proposed Hydrogen Oversight and Public Notice Legislation. Millions of Oregonians are seriously concerned about the unconstrained actions of the fossil fuel industry and the dangers we're exposed to in our homes and communities and in the impacts of global climate change. The circumventing of already weak regulations coupled with nonexistent or toothless oversight of the energy industry present growing challenges and dangers to our state.

Recent actions by Northwest Natural Gas raise very real concerns about their practice of "hydrogen blending" in a product they market as safe, "natural" gas. Hydrogen blending is known to increase the volatility of gas, which, in the case of undetected leaks, may result in higher risks of explosions, house fires, and other public health and safety concerns.

If left unchecked by strong regulations and oversight, Northwest Natural will force customers to pay the costs of their dangerous corporate gambits. Customers will see our ever-growing monthly bills climb even higher, and we have no alternate supplier to turn to. Northwest Natural has zero competition in the Portland metro region, leaving hundreds of thousands of Oregonians who live in this noncompetitive environment with no other option for heating our homes and cooking our meals.

Equally unjust, as consumers we have zero say or voice in whether we want Northwest Natural to pipe these higher-risk fuels into our homes and businesses. We have no vote on whether we are willing to pay for the infrastructure repairs and expansions inevitably needed to support the company's dangerous plans. The only guard between us and rapacious, unsafe business practices is you — our elected representatives.

I urge you to represent the interests of Oregonian's safety and consumer rights by supporting SB685, the proposed Hydrogen Oversight and Public Notice Legislation.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to Oregon.