

Submitter: Robin Bloomgarden

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB685

Support for SB 685 – Hydrogen Oversight and Public Notice Legislation
Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am Robin Bloomgarden, and I live in Eugene, Oregon.

SB 685 addresses the unregulated practice of blending hydrogen with methane gas. The bill will establish minimum standards for public notice and authorize the Oregon Public Utility Commission performing oversight of safety, health, and alignment with our climate goals. Oregon's current regulatory framework lacks sufficient oversight and notice requirements for hydrogen blending into pipelines that feed natural gas into residential homes. This regulatory gap poses significant risks for ratepayers, public safety, and environmental health.

I was directly affected here in West Eugene when NW “Natural” Gas tried to set this up, with the help of our local water and electricity utility, EWEB. No notice was given to anyone, but we somehow found out and embarrassed EWEB enough that they ended the pilot project in its tracks! Thank god!

I have heard that they are trying to do the same thing in SE Portland. This really is an outrage, especially when our elected leaders are involved with sneaking in these questionable and dangerous changes with no notice to the populous!

Adding Hydrogen to our existing gas lines can cause them to become very brittle, causing leaks. Hydrogen is more explosive than methane (“natural” gas). Retrofitting pipes to receive this blended mix is costly and ultimately utilities may transfer costs to ratepayers, thereby raising rates even higher, while we are ignorant of what is actually going on.

We have a right to know the risks associated with mixing these explosive products together, and also the right to say NO!

Strong regulations are needed to ensure public safety and transparency! I strongly urge you to VOTE YES on SB 685.

Thank you,
Robin Bloomgarden