



## **OREGON STATE SENATE**

February 10, 2025

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock-Smith, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 685 with the -1 amendment, a bill to establish minimum public notice for hydrogen blending into **residential** gas systems.

### The Need for Oversight & Transparency

Last summer, hundreds of Oregonians reached out to my office after learning about the Northwest Natural pilot project that had recently started blending hydrogen into residential heating pipes in southeast Portland. Constituents expressed concerns about safety and health risks and the lack of transparency and public notice before this project moved forward. In our follow-up with the PUC, I learned that our state has a gap in our current regulatory framework, and SB 685 seeks to address it responsibly.

Since then, my team and I have actively engaged with all stakeholders—meeting with community members, advocates, labor leaders, industry representatives, and regulators. I toured the NW Natural facility and have spoken with Northwest Natural, the renewable hydrogen alliance, the Carpenters, Electricians, and Ironworkers to better understand the industry and labor’s concerns and priorities.

We’ve worked to ensure this bill is balanced, practical, and responsive to the input we’ve received.

### What SB 685 Does

The core of this bill is simple: Every gas pipeline has risks. The goal is that when hydrogen gas is introduced into Oregonian’s homes, there should be a minimum public notice. SB 685 ensures this by requiring that the utility:

- ✓ Notify the Public Utility Commission (PUC) **before** they start blending hydrogen into residential gas pipelines, providing information on safety, blend ratios, and local impacts.
- ✓ Provide Advance information to customers.
- ✓ Notify local fire and health departments to ensure emergency preparedness and public health awareness.

### Changes in the -1 Amendment



**KHANH PHAM**  
**STATE SENATOR**  
DISTRICT 23

I want to acknowledge that the bill before us is a result of a significant dialogue and compromise on both sides. Neighbors, including my constituents, wanted a stronger bill requiring advance approval from the PUC **before** hydrogen flowed into their homes. Industry, including NW Natural and related unions, expressed major concerns about the base bill slowing down innovation with hydrogen as a clean energy. My office and I have worked for months with all stakeholders to find a reasonable common ground. This has resulted in the dash 1 amendment.

The dash 1 amendment addresses the industry's major concern by removing the PUC approval requirement before blending starts. The dash 1 amendment maintains just the piece about public notice to customers, the PUC, and local fire and emergency responders.

### A Path Forward

This bill is about ensuring safety, public trust, and transparency as Oregon navigates the clean energy transition. Hydrogen has an important role in Oregon's energy future, with the potential to help us decarbonize critical sectors like industry and transportation. I will continue working with the Regional Hydrogen Association and other partners to ensure we can develop this industry in ways that respect Oregon communities and their right to know what flows through their pipes and appliances.

I urge your support for SB 685 with the -1 amendment and look forward to continuing this important conversation.