



Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and members Golden, Pham, and Robinson,

I am writing on behalf of Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter to support SB 685, which would enact some safeguards and transparency around the blending of hydrogen into pipelines to protect community health, safety, and utility affordability. This is a common sense bill that addresses new and risky suggestions by Oregon utilities to blend up to 20% hydrogen by volume into the natural gas pipelines.

Why is hydrogen blending a concern?

1. Hydrogen blended into natural gas pipelines is burned in heaters and gas stoves. That hydrogen combustion can worsen respiratory diseases such as asthma due to increased emission of health-harming nitrogen oxide (NOx). Recognizing these dangers, the American Medical Association advocates for programs that help low and middle income families switch to electric stoves.<sup>1</sup>
2. Blends above 5% hydrogen increase safety risks from leaks, embrittlement of gas infrastructure, and malfunctions in household appliances like gas stoves and heaters.<sup>2</sup>
3. Hydrogen produced from methane (fossil gas or RNG), uses far more of the original fuel to provide the same amount of heating, and that increased gas production results not only in additional cost to the end-consumer, but in additional climate-harming methane leakage<sup>3</sup>, safety hazards and environmental justice impacts.<sup>4</sup>
4. Even if green hydrogen –defined as hydrogen produced through water electrolysis in line with the three pillars of additional, time-matched, and deliverable carbon-free electricity– is used, the maximum climate benefit from hydrogen blending into natural gas pipelines is 7%.<sup>5</sup> (This is in an ideal and unlikely situation with no hydrogen leaks; leaked hydrogen has negative climate impacts<sup>6</sup> and we advocate that both hydrogen and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/hydrogen?uri=%2FAMADoc%2Fdirectives.xml-D-135.965.xml>; <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/gas%20stove?uri=%2FAMADoc%2Fdirectives.xml-D-135.964.xml>

<sup>2</sup> <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M496/K285/496285890.PDF>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/documents/Pipeline%20Methane%20Leaks%20Report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1913663>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cngc.com/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/IRP/2023/washington/TAG-6-Meeting-Minutes.pdf> ; <https://earthjustice.org/feature/green-hydrogen-renewable-zero-emission>

<sup>6</sup> <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.3c09030>

methane leaks be evaluated and quantified by Oregon decision-makers.)

5. System-wide, using inefficient hydrogen instead of direct electrification could increase both pollution and utility prices.<sup>7</sup> Building professionals, analysts and scientists concur that electrifying homes is more affordable, safer and several times more efficient for residential and commercial decarbonization.<sup>8</sup>
6. Money spent on hydrogen blending infrastructure is money not spent on the transition to heat pumps. This is especially concerning as Oregon experiences more frequent extreme heat, as heat pumps not only reduce pollution and utility bills, but also provide lifesaving cooling.<sup>9</sup>
7. For more detail and references, see the Report we, along with Green Energy Institute, Beyond Toxics, and Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, are submitting as additional SB 685 testimony.

Communities impacted by hydrogen blending projects have asked for transparency and protection.<sup>10</sup> Please heed their call.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Helena Birecki  
Interim Chair  
Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter

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<https://energyinnovation.org/publication/evidence-shows-three-pillars-remain-crucial-for-45v-hydrogen-tax-credit-to-protect-climate-consumers-industry/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://spectrum.ieee.org/home-heating-with-hydrogen-is-ill-advised>

<sup>9</sup> Heat Pump Systems, <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/heat-pump-systems> (accessed Feb. 9, 2025)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.opb.org/article/2024/08/05/nw-natural-hydrogen-project/>

### About The Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter

The Climate Reality Project (CRP) Portland Chapter is a local, volunteer-led chapter of The Climate Reality Project, an international nonprofit of 5 million members led by climate leader and former US Vice President Al Gore, whose mission is to catalyze global solutions to the climate crisis. Our legislative committee bases its advocacy on CRP's 5 pillars: a just transition to clean energy, zero carbon transportation, climate justice, green communities, and a fair, representative democracy. [climaterealitypdx.com/](http://climaterealitypdx.com/), [www.climaterealityproject.org](http://www.climaterealityproject.org)