



February 10, 2025

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

350PDX supports SB 685 to provide hydrogen blending oversight and public notice.

For over a decade, 350PDX has been working to build a movement for climate justice in the greater Portland metro area. We have hundreds of active volunteers with a base of thousands, all who support our work to fight for just solutions to the climate crisis. We are weighing in on this issue because we believe that emissions from methane gas – the primary feedstock for blended hydrogen – at all levels: extraction, production, and leakage are significant. The climate impact of methane is particularly concerning because, over a 20-year timeframe, methane is 90 times more effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. Blending hydrogen with methane also prolongs our dependency on fossil fuels. Burning methane gas produces numerous health-harming pollutants and fuels the climate crisis we are experiencing at this very moment. Blended hydrogen also has a lower energy content. Given the limits to hydrogen blending, and due to its lower energy content by volume than methane, a blend of 20% hydrogen and 80% methane could only reduce carbon emissions by at most 7%.

We have many members and active volunteers living in SE Portland who are gravely concerned about the lack of oversight with the experimental hydrogen blending project currently underway by NW Natural. NW Natural is acting without any oversight, accountability, or transparency around the amount of hydrogen being blended or the health and safety impacts that blending could have on customers. NW Natural did not notify its customers of this hydrogen blending experimentation even though the for-profit utility is using ratepayer funds to conduct this experimentation.

We are also concerned that without prior approval, utilities may transfer unanticipated maintenance and operational costs to ratepayers, raising utility bills. Rising utility costs is already placing an unfair burden on consumers, and we must be doing what we can to lower utility costs as opposed to continue to see them skyrocket.

Our organization strongly urges you to support SB 685.

Sincerely,

Dineen Crowe,
Campaign Manager,
350PDX