

Submitter: Jeff Kleen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB685

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, members of the committee, my name is Jeff Kleen, and I'm a long-time resident of the Brooklyn neighborhood in SE Portland. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm here today to express my support for Senate Bill 685.

I first learned that NW Natural was blending hydrogen into the gas supply at their facility near my neighborhood at the end of 2024. By that time, I learned later, they had already been doing it for about a year.

I was shocked, and really, disappointed, that NW Natural would begin that practice without letting neighborhood residents know. So for more than a year now, my wife and I, and our friends and neighbors in Brooklyn, have been exposed to higher risks of methane leaks, and even explosions, right in our homes.

I was even more shocked when I learned that what NW Natural did was perfectly legal, because Oregon doesn't require public utilities to report hydrogen-blending projects for oversight and accountability.

I know you're hearing from a lot of experts today, and I'm glad, because that is not me. I am not an expert! And that's exactly why I support this bill.

I depend on the experts at the Public Utility Commission, the Multnomah County Health Department, and the fire marshall, to look out for my safety and well-being.

I think the term "common sense" is overused in politics, but when I read SB 685, I truly thought, "Well this is just common sense." It's in everyone's best interest, including NW Natural and other public utilities, to exercise this kind of transparency, oversight, and planning.

Ultimately, this feels like it's about honesty, community, and an open public process—values we've always tried to uphold in Oregon.

Thank you.