



www.RogueClimate.org || PO Box 1980, Phoenix, OR 97535 || 541-301-9204

Coos Bay Office: 243 S. 2nd St. Coos Bay, OR 97420 || 541- 816-0758

Re: Rogue Climate Testimony regarding SB 5518

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 5518: Relating to the financial administration of the State Department of Energy; declaring an emergency.

Rogue Climate serves and works alongside Southern Oregon and South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, and communities of color, by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, and a healthy environment. We do so through leadership development, political education, and campaigns for policies that benefit our communities.

After advocating for the creation of the program in the legislature, Rogue Climate now participates directly as a service provider for the Community Heat Pump Deployment Program in Jackson County. We have installed heat pumps in 29 single-family homes located in designated environmental justice communities in the past five months. However, the need continues to outweigh available resources. The waitlist for our CHPDP program is currently at 54 single-family homeowners and continues to grow every day. We will only be able to support another 10 families with the remaining fund allocations.

Many of the families we are serving have small children in the home and are facing the choice between using plug-in heaters to warm at night or sleep in a cold home at night to save money. This grant program is so important because we are building relationships with community members, not just throwing money at a problem. The CHPDP funding allows us to provide education and support from trusted individuals in the client's community who understand their direct needs.

Ductless heat pumps are an important climate justice solution. Heat pumps use significantly less energy than traditional heating sources, [cutting climate pollution by 84%](#) compared to gas furnaces over the lifetime of the equipment. This efficiency results in energy bills that are up to 3 times lower and less greenhouse gas emissions inside the home. This is crucial for already vulnerable families forced to choose between staying warm or buying food and medicine. The increasing prevalence of extreme weather events is a stark reminder that we need to invest in community resiliency. ODOE found that [58% of Oregonians lack sufficient cooling](#) at home, and during the 2021 heat dome it was reported that [85% of heat-related deaths occurred in homes without cooling](#). Heat pumps provide reliable heating and cooling during extreme weather events.



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As climate impacts continue to break records for extreme weather in Oregon year after year, these two programs continue to be essential for investing in the safety and resiliency of communities across the state. These programs are critical to reaching [Oregon's goal of installing 500,000 heat pumps by 2030](#). We join the dozens of member organizations of the Building Resilience coalition to urge you to re-invest \$30 million for the Rental Home Heat Pump Program and \$15 million for the Community Heat Pump Deployment Program for the next two years. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jess Grady-Benson, Organizing Director

Zoe Serrano, Legislative Coordinator