

Date: February 11, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Energy, and Environment

Subject: Support for SB 685 Hydrogen Blending Oversight and Public Notice

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

My name is Sage Miller and I am a third year **environmental science major at Willamette University and a Salem resident**. Oregon's current regulatory framework lacks sufficient oversight and notice requirements for blending hydrogen into natural gas residential home pipelines. This regulatory gap poses significant risks for ratepayers, public safety, and environmental health. This is why I support SB 685 to provide hydrogen blending oversight and public notice.

As a Salem renter, I am aware that a large majority of Salem residents rely on NW Natural to supply the natural gas essential to providing heat and electricity to our homes. However, this means that **NW natural has a direct effect on our health, safety and wellbeing, as consumers rely on honest utility rates and clean air.**

It has come to my attention that 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.

Health: the American Medical Association recognizes the **dangers of blending hydrogen** and “natural” gas. Hydrogen may possibly lead to more emissions of nitrogen oxides, raising **risks of respiratory diseases**.

Safety: My apartment complex, like many other Salem residents, consists of **old infrastructure, including our pipelines** which means the **risks for hydrogen gas leakages are greater**. Additionally hydrogen ignites more easily and is **more explosive** than methane. This increases the danger of explosions in buildings. Methane leaks inside residential and commercial buildings when appliances are in use and when they are turned off. Hydrogen could make these leaks more dangerous.

Consumer Wellbeing: Without prior approval, utilities may transfer unanticipated maintenance and operational costs to ratepayers, **raising utility bills**.

Clean Air: The feedstock required for **blended hydrogen is methane gas**, a fossil fuel. Emissions from methane gas 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.

On behalf of myself and my community I strongly urge you to support SB 685.

Sincerely,

Sage Miller