



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 685

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 685: Relating to hydrogen; 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.

Rogue Climate has been organizing with Rogue Valley youth and community members to pass policy to incentivize new homes to be built with safe, efficient electric appliances. This campaign emerged from youth and community desires to hold Ashland accountable to their climate goals, but also to protect residents from the health and safety impacts of burning gas in homes. Youth who grow up in homes with gas appliances are 42% more likely to experience asthma, and pollutants associated with burning gas cause cancers, respiratory diseases and blood diseases. 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.

Oregon's current regulatory framework lacks sufficient oversight and notice requirements for blending hydrogen into natural gas residential home pipelines. Hydrogen is more likely to leak from existing gas pipes and appliances. This regulatory gap poses significant risks for ratepayers, public safety, and environmental health. Without proper oversight and public notice, this is a practice that could continue spreading with other gas utilities across the state. Just two years ago, NW Natural [scrapped](#) hydrogen blending plans in Eugene due to public outcry over lack of transparency. Communities deserve and want to know the risks associated with hydrogen blending and utilities have a responsibility to communicate that.

Blending hydrogen with methane is not an effective climate solution and prolongs our dependency on fossil fuels, making it near impossible to meet state climate goals. 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. [Studies](#) have shown that replacing 20% of natural gas with hydrogen only reduces emissions by up to 7%, while also being one of the costliest options to lower greenhouse gas emissions.



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Given that customers are burdened with the cost of these projects, it is essential to demand greater transparency and meaningful public engagement to ensure that our communities have a say in their health and safety.

It is clear that community members overwhelmingly want to transition away from fossil fuels and towards safer and healthier energy systems. Utilities should invest in transitioning towards efficient, safe and renewable electricity, instead of expensive hydrogen blending that offers minimal benefit and increased risks. Rogue Climate supports SB 685 to provide hydrogen blending oversight and public notice to protect our community members and the environment.

Sincerely,

Jess Grady-Benson, Organizing Director

Zöe Serrano, Legislative Coordinator