



The Climate Reality Project[®]

PORTLAND CHAPTER

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 5518 which lays out the budget for the Oregon Department of Energy. The ODOE does extremely important work, including the supporting heat pump deployment for owner and renter occupied homes. The transition to heat pumps, especially when paired with home weatherization, is a quadruple win for climate, public health, utility affordability, and electric grid stability¹.

As an organization that educates and advocates about the urgent need for a just transition to clean energy, climate justice and public health, and building green communities, 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.

Heat pumps are two to four times more efficient than traditional furnaces. They can save the average US household several hundred dollars per year on utility costs and reduce climate and health damaging pollution significantly compared to other ways of heating homes.² They are so efficient because they move, rather than create heat. A heat pump can also be used to move heat in the opposite direction (remove heat from the indoor environment) to provide lifesaving cooling. For climate resilience and public health, since heat pumps do not pull air in from the outside like window air conditioners do, they provide protection from wildfire smoke and other outdoor air pollution.³

The programs serve a real need. Since the first heat pump supported by the Community Heat Pump Deployment Program was installed on December 19, 2023, 96% of the installations have been in prioritized households who belong to an environmental justice community, relied on bulk fuels or electric resistance heating, and/or lived in a structure without a functioning heating or cooling system before the installation.⁴

1

<https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2022/06/report-rapid-transition-electric-heat-pumps-oregon-will-lower-household>

2 <https://homes.rewiringamerica.org/articles/heating-and-cooling/heat-pump-savings>

3 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-heat-pumps-explainer-2023-1.6911499>

4 <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/Data-and-Reports/Documents/2024-Comm-Heat-Pump-Deploy-Program-Report.pdf>

The first round of funding for the Rental Home Heat Pump Program helped accomplish over 2,961 projects across 22 counties, with nearly half the funds targeted at low- and moderate-income rental properties and affordable housing sites including rented mobile homes and RVs.⁵ The program was so useful that an additional \$4 million allocation from the legislature in 2024 was allocated in a single day.

The heat pump programs are heartening examples of well-run, efficient government programs that serve the public good in the short and long term. Please continue them.

Thank you,

Amanda Duncan
Legislative Committee Co-Chair
Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter

⁵ <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/287908>

About The Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter

The Climate Reality Project (CRP) Portland Chapter is a local, volunteer-led chapter of The Climate Reality Project, an international nonprofit of 5 million members led by climate leader and former US Vice President Al Gore, whose mission is to catalyze global solutions to the climate crisis. Our legislative committee bases its advocacy on CRP's 5 pillars: a just transition to clean energy, zero carbon transportation, climate justice, green communities, and a fair, representative democracy. climaterealitypdx.com/, www.climaterealityproject.org