

Date: February 11, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Energy, and Environment

Subject: Support 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 Brenda Garcia Mejia, and I live in Salem, Oregon, and have for a long time now. As a user of NW Natural gas, I recognize that there are already harms and potential risks, including environmental harm and leaks. 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.

I am truly concerned about the lack of honesty and oversight regarding the blending of hydrogen into our home's natural gas pipelines, mainly knowing that NW Natural labeled it as an "experiment." Regardless of it being one, **not taking into mind the potential health risks of customers is disappointing, and to continue without alerting ahead of time or providing a form of informed consent is highly unethical.** Real researchers know that when conducting an experiment, particularly on something that could impact the general public, even if it is minimal, it is essential to inform those involved and ensure that no harm comes to them regardless of how large or small the tested population is. The only reasoning for withholding back any information would be if no harm whatsoever is occurring and the process tends to be observational, which is clearly not the case here. It makes me wonder how many other customers are unknowingly at risk of being exposed to potential health risks. Moreover, what would the customer's reaction be if this were more widely publicized? There are already rising health concerns in general, and the blending of hydrogen into natural gas is an additional public health concern that is not needed. It is important to, above all, think about the potential impacts on vulnerable populations like older adults, such as our grandparents and friends or relatives with already weak immune systems. Did NW Natural consider the harm this could cause to those communities? Perhaps even their own community?

The fact that NW Natural has not been openly honest about their experiment unfortunately leads me to ponder that they are aware that they would not have the public's support if they were truthful. If the company were fully open and noted all the potential risks, I know customers would be concerned and begin questioning; I know I would. **And I, as much as others, have a right to know how the gas being used in our homes could affect our health**

and safety. It is not only concerning to acknowledge the NW's Natural push for this experimentation but their reasoning as well.
I firmly urge you to support SB 685.

Sincerely,
Brenda Garcia Mejía
Salem, Oregon