



# Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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February 13, 2025

To: Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and members of the Senate on Energy and Environment Committee

From: Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy & Program Director, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB)

Re: Support for SB 685 with –1 Amendment

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The Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) is a statewide nonprofit consumer advocacy organization developed by citizens' initiative in 1984. CUB represents the interests of Oregon households by advocating for utility regulations and policies that protect your wallet. To date, we have saved Oregon ratepayers over \$10 billion. We ask that you support SB 685 with the -1 amendment.

As a consumer advocacy organization, CUB supports this bill. Giving customers notice of a project piloting a novel technology in Oregon is transparent, responsible, and just common sense. CUB is more concerned about why companies wouldn't want to tell its customers it is trying out a novel fuel source in their homes.

Hydrogen is more likely to leak than natural gas and has a lower energy density. But blended at low levels, it may not cause problems. However, customers have a right to know what is coming into their homes. Using a neighborhood as a test should require notification. People are clearly wary of the new fuel, as we saw with a proposed project in Eugene. If the fuel is as harmless as proponents claim, more information—not less—shouldn't be a bad thing?

CUB has heard opponents to SB 685 express concern about impacts to rates from this bill. CUB's role is to consider the costs for-profit utilities are asking customers to cover. We are more than happy to work with investor-owned utilities on how to keep costs down in order to comply with this bill, including finding ways to integrate the outreach into other outreach the companies are already doing. Being transparent about using a new type of gas in someone's home is responsible and in the best interests of customers. If people are afraid, help quell their fears.

CUB appreciates the information-sharing and transparency encouraged by this bill. Please support SB 685 with the -1 amendment.