



February 20, 2025

**To:** House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection  
**Re:** Support for HB 3179, FAIR Energy Act

Chair Sosa, Vice-Chair Chaichi, Vice-Chair Osborne, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB 3179**. Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) is an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations. Our mission includes addressing the socioeconomic disparities experienced by individuals, families, and communities of color; and to engage in collective action for social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice, and prosperity.

Over the past few years, CCC has held several community meetings about energy justice and affordability. We have heard directly from customers about their struggles to afford their energy bills amidst rising costs for housing, food, and other essentials. We've learned that if community members do have air conditioning in their homes, many are too worried about their energy costs to turn them on during heat waves. And so many members of our community also avoid turning on their heating as much as possible when it gets too cold. As climate change leads to more weather extremes, ensuring that our neighbors and families can afford energy is critical to ensuring their safety and wellbeing during times of crisis.

But as we've seen recently, energy rates have increased significantly every single year, with investor-owned utility costs increasing by about 50% since 2021. And record numbers of households are being disconnected from their gas or electricity when they are unable to pay their bills. While advocates such as CCC have pushed for deeper bill discounts for low-income customers, it is clear that such programs are not enough to alleviate energy burden and more needs to be done to ensure Oregonians can afford their energy bills. HB 3179 allows the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to consider customer impacts when making decisions about rate increases, and limits how often they occur. These provisions can protect vulnerable customers from rate increases that take effect in the winter, when energy usage is high.

In addition to placing safeguards on energy costs and equipping our utility regulators with the tools necessary to keep rates as low as possible, HB 3179 also helps increase transparency around energy pricing between customers and utilities. As an organization who has intervened in several rate cases - a process that is not accessible to the general public - we underscore the importance of more time between these cases and more clarity for customers to understand how their dollars are being invested by the utilities.

HB 3179 includes sensible solutions to ensure that our communities do not continue to forego essentials such as food or medicine to afford their energy bills, or live in unsafe conditions during extreme weather. We urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nikita Daryanani', written in a cursive style.

Nikita Daryanani  
Climate and Energy Policy Manager  
Coalition of Communities of Color