

Date: February 19, 2025

To: House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Subject: FAIR Energy Act

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

My name is Greer Klepacki, and I am the Policy & Advocacy Manager with Community Energy Project (CEP), where we serve clients on the front lines of climate change including low-income, seniors and folks with disabilities. CEP offers free environmental and energy education, weatherization supplies, direct home repairs, energy upgrades, full energy retrofits, and maintenance services, all at no cost to our community members.

CEP supports HB 3179: FAIR Energy Act because access to clean and affordable energy is a human right, and we know that far too many Oregonians from all constituencies are struggling to pay their energy bills. From 2021-now, Oregon's largest for-profit utilities have raised their rates 50%+, and one utility reported record profits in 2024. This has left far too many families in dire financial situations, or forced these families to live without heat and cooling altogether, which can have devastating consequences.

As mentioned, Community Energy Project serves some of Oregon's most vulnerable residents. 29% of CEP's clients are 55+ years of age, and 32% of households we serve have someone with a disability living in them. In certain instances, our clients are living on a fixed income or in manufactured homes like mobile homes. These clients will be especially vulnerable to having to make difficult choices of what bills to pay, or being unable to afford their energy bills entirely. Even more concerning, it is not uncommon for us to hear clients complain of costly energy bills, some skyrocketing to around \$900/month.

The FAIR Energy Act empowers state regulators at the Oregon Public Utility Commission to set energy billing rates at the lowest possible level, so families can better avoid big increases in energy bills. The bill also moves any rate increases out of winter, when energy usage is at its highest. Additionally, the bill will increase transparency so that customers know what their money pays for and what to expect from any changes in energy bills.

I urge you to support HB 3179 so we can continue building strong Oregon communities, especially in places where it matters most.

Sincerely,

Greer Klepacki, Policy & Advocacy Manager with Community Energy Project
Portland, OR 97214