



THE BUREAU OF
**PLANNING &
SUSTAINABILITY**

February 21, 2025

House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: Support for House Bill 3179

Chair Sosa and Members of the Committee:

The City of Portland supports House Bill 3179 for “Fairness & Affordability in Residential Energy.” Energy rates have increased dramatically in recent years, and today too many Portlanders are struggling to pay their energy bills.

According to Oregon Department of Energy, 27% of households in Multnomah County are energy burdened, spending more than 6% of household income on energy costs. In 2024, the impact of rising utility costs became evident, as the number of utility disconnections due to nonpayment hit record highs. When households cannot afford to pay their energy bills, they are forced to pay in other ways. Disconnections threaten people’s health, livelihood, and housing stability.

HB 3179 seeks to center households and families by requiring greater transparency, additional consumer protections, and an assessment of the real human impacts of utility rate increases. The City of Portland supports the -1 proposed amendments that rate increases should not take effect during the winter heating season and should not occur more frequently than 18 months.

We urge the House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection to reaffirm the Oregon Public Utility Commission’s duty and power to protect utility customers and grant the Commission “broad discretion in setting the lowest reasonable rates” and the ability to “mitigate or phase in an increase in rates.” We also support the proposal to grant the Commission discretion to allow securitization for capital investments to deploy necessary utility infrastructure with low-interest financing that reduces costs to residential ratepayers.



City of Portland, Oregon | Bureau of Planning and Sustainability | www.portland.gov/bps
1810 SW 5th Avenue, Suite 710, Portland Oregon, 97201 | Phone: 503-823-7700 | Relay: 711

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services, contact 311, Relay: 711.

Traducción e Interpretación | Biên Dịch và Thông Dịch | अनुवादन तथा व्याख्या | 口笔译服务 | Устный и письменный перевод | Turjumaad iyo Fasiraad | Письмовий і усний переклад | Traducere și interpretariat | Chiaku me Awewen Kapas | 翻訳または通訳 | ການແປພາສາ ຫຼື ການອະທິບາຍ | الترجمة التحريرية أو الشفوية | Portland.gov/bps/accommodation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. We appreciate your consideration of these comments and ask for your support of House Bill 3179.

Sincerely,



Eric Engstrom
Interim Director
City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability



City of Portland, Oregon | Bureau of Planning and Sustainability | www.portland.gov/bps
1810 SW 5th Avenue, Suite 710, Portland Oregon, 97201 | Phone: 503-823-7700 | Relay: 711