



# Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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February 22, 2025

To: Senator Woods, Representative Gomberg, and members of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

From: Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy Manager, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

Re: Support for HB 5034 – Oregon Public Utility Commission's Biennial Budget

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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 customers of for-profit utilities over \$10 billion. CUB is pleased to support HB 5034, the Oregon Public Utility Commission's (PUC) budget bill. The PUC's primary obligation is to protect customers of monopoly utilities.

The PUC work is becoming increasingly challenging. Many energy-related laws have been passed in Oregon in the last five years. On top of the numerous ratemaking proceedings the PUC oversees, the agency's obligations include requiring utilities to develop and implement wildfire mitigation plans and meet clean energy standards. As a result, there are more issues requiring PUC decisions.

We believe the budget outlined in the PUC's budget request is reasonable and will provide the PUC with the resources it needs to meet its ongoing and growing obligations. The PUC must receive robust support for its wildfire mitigation arm. The first couple of years of reviewing wildfire mitigation plans has shown that the agency needs significant resources in order to adequately review utility wildfire mitigation plans, monitor implementation of the plans, and ensure the utilities are providing plans that consider what is best for Oregonians.

The PUC has taken on a big task in implementing Oregon's clean energy laws for electric and gas for-profit utilities, and other energy-related bills like the important work being done in HB 2475 (the Energy Affordability Act). We believe additional staff and technical assistance will continue to help the PUC and interested stakeholders have a more robust and efficient process. The directives in these laws are ambitious, bold, and important. They also require a lot of work. It is important that the PUC have adequate funding to meet the Legislature's directives. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the PUC's Biennial Budget.

It has been our experience that PUC staff and the Commissioners work very hard and take their responsibility seriously. The PUC has recently reorganized itself internally in an effort to improve its services and operate more efficiently. CUB benefits greatly from PUC Staff analysis because it is impossible for our small regulatory team to review every single issue in heavy detail. We are certain that ratepayers benefit from providing this agency the resources necessary to meet this critical obligation. We would appreciate your support for HB 5034. Thank you.