

Submitter: Krstafer Pinkerton
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB88

Testimony in Support of SB 88 – Holding Utility Companies Accountable

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Krstafer Pinkerton, and I reside in Chiloquin, Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 88 (SB 88), which aims to remove unnecessary expenses—such as corporate lobbying, legal fees, advertising, and industry association memberships—from customers’ utility bills.

The Impact of High Utility Costs on Oregonians

Over the past four years, my energy bill has increased significantly, reflecting a nearly 50% hike in charges. Like many Oregonians, I live in a rural area where access to affordable energy is essential for survival, particularly in extreme weather conditions. These excessive and unjustified increases force working individuals, families, and small businesses to make impossible choices—heat or groceries, electricity or rent.

High energy costs do not build resilience; they create financial strain and, in some cases, life-threatening circumstances. During record-breaking heat waves and winter storms, vulnerable communities face disproportionate risks simply because they cannot afford the rising cost of energy.

Unfair Cost Transfers from Corporate Utilities to Ratepayers

For-profit monopoly utility companies are misusing ratepayer funds to cover their corporate expenses—expenses that should be paid out of their profits, not imposed on the backs of hard-working Oregonians. Specifically, utilities are charging us for:

- Expensive lawyers defending their rate hikes
- Lobbyists advocating for their corporate interests, not public interests
- Industry association fees that benefit the company, not the customer
- Advertising costs that serve to promote their brand rather than provide essential services

These unjustified costs inflate our bills without improving service reliability or affordability. Utilities are profit-driven entities, and they should bear the cost of their own legal, lobbying, and promotional activities—just like any other private company.

A Proven Solution: SB 88

SB 88 is a common-sense measure that ensures Oregon follows the lead of states like Colorado, Maine, and Connecticut, which have already passed similar legislation to protect ratepayers from corporate exploitation. This bill will:

- Stop utilities from passing “junk” costs onto customers
- Ensure rate increases reflect actual energy costs—not corporate overhead
- Make utility companies more accountable for how they spend their revenue

By passing SB 88, we can provide immediate financial relief to families, seniors, and small business owners while holding utility corporations accountable for their spending.

Call to Action

I urge you to support SB 88 and stand with Oregonians who demand fair and transparent utility pricing. No one should be forced to subsidize corporate profits while struggling to afford basic necessities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to making energy costs fairer and more affordable for all.

Sincerely,
Krstafer Pinkerton
Chiloquin, Oregon