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Testimony supporting Senate Bill 88

Chair Sollman and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment:

As I have noted previously, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now is a grassroots climate organization of some 2,000 Southern Oregonians. We are concerned about the climate crisis and seek federal, state and local action to address it. We are rural and coastal Southern Oregonians who live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought, rising sea level and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to impose on us. Because of our concern, we pay close attention to efforts nationally, statewide, and locally that impact our collective efforts to address the climate crisis in a socially just manner. As our logo above indicates, the focus of SOCAN is to promote action through science.

I write today to express SOCAN's support for SB 88 which: "Prohibits an electric or gas company from recovering from ratepayers costs or expenses associated with advertising, political influence activity, litigation, penalties or fines and certain compensation." OLIS 2025

Most Oregonians are connected to power sources, usually electricity and gas. For many Oregonians, especially low-income residents, the cost of this energy can comprise a substantial energy burden (e.g., DOE 2018) NREL (updated) reported that energy burden ranges from a low of below 3.8% of annual gross income to a high exceeding 6.0%. Generally low-income households exist in the higher energy burden range. Indeed, Kempe (2024) suggested that the fact that low-income households suffer a high energy burden prompts calls for more government action. As Shuff pointed out, rural Oregonians suffer particularly severely from a high energy burden. One solution to this problem is to promote energy efficiency (ACEEE undated) as addressed in HB3081. Another is to provide consumers with guidance on how to find incentives for electrifying their energy source, while a third is to address the ongoing trend in which utilities seek rate increases to subsidize activities that customers should not be subsidizing, activities that should be funded out of the inordinate financial rewards that executives and shareholders reap from the energy supplied. This is the essence of SB88 seeking to 'get the junk' out of rate increase requests.'

In the interests of supporting social justice as we collectively address the cause for the climate crisis, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now endorses SB88 and urges a 'Do Pass' recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted



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