

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

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

I am writing in support of 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."

I am insulated from the rate hikes as I installed solar panels on my home almost 3 years ago, and replaced my old gas furnace with a heat pump. However, I do pay for electricity in the winter and have seen the rates rise for those 3 months.

I am concerned for low-income residents, many of who experience a substantial energy burden sometimes paying in excess of 6% of their income for energy.

I would like to see an amendment to SB 88 that would restrict the utilities from shutting of gas or electricity to homes during extreme weather—below freezing or extreme heat events. This endangers the health and life of residents.

An additional amendment would add the funds disallowed for lobbying and advertising, etc, to the programs for low-income residents that pays for some of their utility bill. When a customer fails to pay a bill, and is notified their power may be cut off, the notice should include information about the programs to subsidize rates, the eligibility requirements, and how to apply.

I urge you to support SB 88 and consider the amendments suggested above, to better protect low-income residents.

Thank you, Darlene Chirman, Portland, Oregon