

Submitter: Serena Campas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB88

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Smith, and committee members:

My name is Serena Campas, and I am a Policy Associate for Rewiring America, a national nonprofit focused on electrifying households across the country. I am testifying in support of SB 88, which will protect Oregonians from bearing improper utility costs by ensuring these charges are shifted back to utilities rather than passed onto customers.

At Rewiring America, we envision a fully-electric future where households are powered by clean, efficient technologies – heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, solar, battery storage, and more – creating healthier, more resilient, and more comfortable living spaces for families and communities. Oregon has long recognized the need to address climate change, and has responded by establishing ambitious climate action goals and emissions reduction targets. Electrification of buildings is an important piece of that plan. However, achieving Oregon's goals depends on an affordable and accessible transition to electrification, and ever-rising electricity costs present a significant barrier.

It is imperative that regulators ensure utilities – not customers – bear the cost of non-essential expenses. While the Oregon Public Utilities Commission determines recoverable costs for utilities during rate cases, utilities can still request rate increases that include expenses such as corporate lobbying fees, advertising, and industry association fees. With hundreds, if not thousands, of documents submitted by utilities during rate cases, it is a major burden for advocates and ratepayers to review all of the costs outlined and prepare rebuttals as to why each inappropriate charge should not be shouldered by customers.

SB 88 provides much needed clarity as to what types of charges should be coming out of company profits as opposed to ratepayers' pockets. Ultimately, this legislation takes a positive step towards protecting ratepayers from paying improper charges in their bills and makes energy more affordable across the board.

We urge you to vote yes on SB 88, and thank you for your consideration.