

Submitter: Ann Turner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB88

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee, My name is Ann Turner. I am a retired physician, a member of and Co-President of the Board of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (Oregon PSR). Oregon PSR works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival. I strongly urge you to support SB 88 to make sure that advertising, legal and lobbyist fees come out of company profits, not rate payer pockets. As a physician, I worked in a federally qualified community health center, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center, caring for low income families who struggled to pay their rent, much less their utilities. Often, patients brought me forms to sign to certify that shutting off their electricity would endanger their health. That was 10 years ago. In the last four years, Oregon's largest for-profit utilities have raised customers' bills by about 50%. Last year, more Oregonians had their utilities disconnected because of an inability to pay their bills than any other year. It is hard to imagine how families of limited means can afford to stay warm or cool with the current rates.

We are in the midst of a climate emergency with heat domes, more hot days than ever in the summer, snow and ice storms bringing temperatures below freezing in the winter. It is only going to get worse. Families face paying their rent or paying their utility bills. In the meantime, utilities are tacking on their costs of advertising and lobbying as well as attorney and industry association fees. These costs should be coming out of company profits not consumer pockets.

This bill is important for the health and well-being of all Oregonians. Thank you in advance for your support of SB 88.

Sincerely,  
Ann Turner, MD  
Portland