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3/13/25

Cascade Supports SB 1143, Thermal Energy Networks (TENs) Bill

Chair Sollman, Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment:

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation submits the following comments in support of SB 1143, which would help accelerate decarbonization by allowing natural gas utilities to pursue thermal energy networks (TENS) pilots. Unlike traditional pipelines that transport natural gas, TENs uses a network of pipes and heat pumps that utilize a liquid conduit to distribute thermal energy between ground, air and surface water sources to buildings connected to the network. The pilots would allow utilities to demonstrate the use and effectiveness of such utility-scale efforts for networked heating and cooling. These pilots would also give the state greater experience on how to integrate such projects into the regulatory process.

Cascade understands the importance of having legislative and regulatory support of networked thermal energy because it's already making a difference in how utilities pursue this technology in Washington state. Following the passage of HB 2131, our company has hired a dedicated Thermal Energy Networks manager who is actively pursuing potential TENs opportunities across our Washington service area. SB 1143 would likewise empower Cascade to pursue pilot opportunities in Oregon with the goal of eventually expanding this technology to support the state's evolving climate priorities and decarbonization efforts.

Ultimately, we believe policies like SB 1143, which has been developed in coordination with Oregon's natural gas utilities, environmental organizations, and labor community, are the best pathway forward for balancing the state's environmental priorities with the need for a just, reliable, and resilient energy future. It is for this reason that we encourage the Committee to support this bill.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alyn Spector
External Affairs Manager
Cascade Natural Gas Corporation