

Submitter: Denice Searcy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1143

YES on SB 1143

I moved here from California where we had natural gas in most communities. It is a much better, more efficient way to heat and cool. The pilots would allow utilities to demonstrate the use and effectiveness of such utility-scale efforts for network heating and cooling these pilots would also give the state greater experience on how to integrate such projects into the regulatory process. The support is to give natural gas providers a fair shape to show their innovation, which they haven't received from the legislature.

I 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. I support this important bill directing PUC to establish a pilot program for natural gas companies in Oregon to bring thermal energy heating and cooling services to their customers. Numerous states including our neighbor to the north, Washington, have passed enabling legislation or are participating in pilots. Thermal energy networks offer a forward-looking concept to provide clean, efficient energy that doesn't overtax our electrical grid or introduce dangerous approaches like hydrogen blending into home and business heating systems. This approach is supported by climate advocates, trades, and gas utilities alike, making it a rare opportunity for progress in meeting our decarbonization and energy efficiency goals that is broadly acceptable.