



March 25, 2025

Testimony of Klamath and Lake Community Action Services (KLCAS)
Submitted to the Oregon House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

RE: House Bill 3792- 3 Amendments

Chair Representative Sosa, Vice-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christina Zamora, and I am the Executive Director of the Klamath and Lake Community Action Services in Klamath Falls. We provide supportive services to low-income community members in Klamath and Lake Counties, including energy assistance, family support and connections and homeless prevention. KLCAS is also an organizational Representative Payee. I am a member of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon's Board of Directors, I recently joined the Energy Trust of Oregon Diversity Advisory Council, I am an Oregon Energy Assistance Coordinators and Affiliates advisory committee member and also participate in other activities related to energy burden reduction, energy efficiency and energy affordability.

Our organization works directly with low-income community members who come to us in crisis; they are not able to pay their rent and/or their utilities. Our team is trained to meet community members where they are, to assess their emergent needs and to provide internal and external referrals. Our team is well versed in the limited resources available in our community and has built relationships with community partners to approach individual needs holistically, leveraging inadequate resources in order to have a greater impact.

In the most recent program year, our team provided energy assistance to 2,566 households, preventing 789 utility disconnections and restoring utility service to 38 households. Of the households assisted, 1,313 were households with at least one member over the age of 60 and 254 households had a family member who is a Veteran. The number of first-time recipient households was 712; only 39 households had a family member who is unemployed. With OEAP funds, we were able to assist 1,141 households, preventing 315 utility disconnections and restoring utility service to 7 households. Of the households assisted with OEAP funds, 683 were households with at least one member over the age of 60 and 129 households had a family member who is a Veteran. The number of first-time OEAP recipients was 225; only 7 households had a family member who is unemployed.



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KLCAS is committed to providing access and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education to all community members. To request an accommodation, contact the KLCAS office at 541-882-3500. Oregon Relay 711.



Combining all resources available to us in FY 24, our team was only able to serve 24% of the eligible population, leaving 76% of the eligible households in our service area at risk of disconnection of their utility service. As utility rates increase, energy affordability becomes a more widespread issue that requires investments to ensure low-income Oregonians are safe and warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

We strongly urge you to support House Bill 3792, to provide resources to our most vulnerable community members who are least able to afford rate increases and to provide the Oregon Public Utility Commission with the flexibility to assess and adjust the amount of OEAP funding every two years. We believe this is a step in the right direction in protecting community members who are most susceptible to disconnections due to non-payment and who can least afford losing access to their utility service.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Christina Zamora".

Christina Zamora
Executive Director



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