



March 27, 2025

House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Sosa, Vice-Chair Chaichi, Vice-Chair Osborne, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO), we strongly urge your support for the -3 amendments to HB 3792. CAPO represents 18 local community action agencies—nonprofit organizations that work tirelessly to address the diverse needs of low-income families and help them overcome the many barriers associated with poverty. While each community we serve is unique, the essential services provided by our agencies are united in their mission to lift families out of poverty. These services include housing assistance, emergency food programs, job training, energy bill support, and childcare services—each critical in ensuring that families have the tools and resources to build a more stable, self-sufficient life.

One of the most urgent needs facing our communities today is the rising cost of energy. As electricity prices continue to climb, more families are seeking assistance to avoid having their power disconnected. Since 2021, Portland General Electric (PGE) and Pacific Power have increased household energy bills by nearly 50%, creating a significant financial burden for low-income households. In fact, over the past year, these utilities disconnected nearly 58,000 households—marking the highest number of disconnections since reporting began in 2018. This alarming trend highlights the growing crisis that many Oregonians are facing in their struggle to keep the lights on and maintain a basic standard of living.

In 2024, our agencies provided \$52.2 million in assistance to 113,609 households throughout the state through the federal Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the state Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP). Established under current law, the OEAP mandates that PGE and Pacific Power set aside \$20 million in funds collected from rates for low-income electric bill payments and crisis assistance for their customers. However, despite the critical need, only 17% of those who qualify for assistance are able to access the funding available through this program, leaving thousands of eligible households without the support they desperately need.

The -3 amendments to HB 3792 will significantly increase the funding for the OEAP, raising the annual allocation to \$40 million. This increase will provide a vital lifeline to Oregonians struggling to cope with skyrocketing energy prices and will help ensure that more households can stay connected to essential services.

We urge you to pass the -3 amendments to HB 3792 and provide greater support for the families and individuals in our communities who are most in need of assistance. With your leadership, we can help make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who are facing the harshest economic challenges in our state.

Thank you,

*Janet*

Janet Allanach

Executive Director

Community Action Partnership of Oregon