

Submitter: James Holland
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3917

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to HB3917, a bill that limits the liability of utility companies like PacifiCorp and shields them from accountability, all while placing additional burdens on the state and taxpayers. As a fire survivor with a claim against PacifiCorp, I find this legislation both unjust and deeply troubling.

HB3917: A Shield for Corporate Negligence

At its core, HB3917 is designed to restructure liability protections for utility companies, effectively reducing their responsibility for damages caused by their negligence. This bill creates an unprecedented legal framework that limits lawsuits from fire victims and forces Oregonians to absorb the financial consequences instead of holding utilities accountable. It sends a clear message: corporate interests matter more than the lives, homes, and livelihoods of fire survivors.

Instead of strengthening protections for the public, this bill introduces untested legal provisions that interfere with well-established liability laws. Utilities operate as private, for-profit entities—if they are negligent, they should be held fully responsible. HB3917 undermines that principle by making it harder for victims to seek legal recourse and recover damages.

Unenforceable Governance & Fiscal Burdens

Beyond its legal ramifications, HB3917 also creates new layers of governance that are untested, unstructured, and unfunded. The bill proposes regulatory mechanisms that the state currently lacks the infrastructure to enforce, meaning that new agencies, oversight committees, or bureaucratic processes would need to be created from scratch. This is an administrative nightmare that will burden state agencies already stretched thin, requiring funding that has not been accounted for in the state budget.

At a time when Oregon faces pressing needs—disaster recovery, wildfire prevention, and infrastructure improvements—this bill diverts resources away from critical public services. Who will pay for these new regulatory structures? The answer is clear: Oregon taxpayers. The state should not be forced to prop up private utilities under the guise of regulatory changes that ultimately work in their favor.

HB3917 and HB3666: A Coordinated Bailout for Utility Companies

This bill, alongside HB3666, represents an orchestrated attempt to shift corporate liability onto the public. Rather than ensuring that utility companies maintain safe infrastructure and adhere to strict fire prevention standards, these bills provide them with financial and legal protections while fire victims are left with fewer avenues for justice.

If the Oregon Legislature allows HB3917 to pass, it will set a dangerous precedent—one where corporate interests override public safety, disaster victims are silenced, and the financial burdens of negligence are socialized while profits remain privatized.

Reject HB3917 – Protect Oregonians, Not Corporate Interests

I urge you to reject HB3917 and any legislation that seeks to shield negligent corporations from the consequences of their actions. Fire survivors deserve justice, not legal roadblocks. Oregon's budget should prioritize public recovery and fire prevention, not fund the creation of new regulatory bodies to oversee a flawed and self-serving policy.

Stand with the people of Oregon—vote NO on HB3917.

Sincerely,

The Holland Family, victims of pacific corps reckless negligence.