

Submitter: Cate Webber
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3792

Members of the Committee - Greetings!

My name is Cate Weber and I live in House District 44. I'm speaking today to ask that you support the OEAP funding expansion bill, HB 3792.

As you know, over the past 4 years expenses have increased for everyone, especially the utility bills. I'm one of the many that have been hit hard by it. I'm 70 years old with some 'hidden' fitness issues that preclude a lot of jobs. My house is in about the same shape except it's 101 years old.

We, my house and I, are on a fixed income that will, for the year 2025, sum up to \$11,520. Yup, \$960/month. The mortgage is \$882 which leaves \$78 for everything else. Fortunately, I'm on SNAP and state health. Unfortunately, my house isn't.

My SNAP card is a cash one so I can squeeze a cash-back on purchases sometimes. Between that and the random gift-check from family, I basically lurch from shut-off notice to shut-off notice.

During the Winter, I have the thermostat set for 60degrees as a norm with 2 warmer periods per day; from 7-10 in the morning and 6-10 in the evening during which it's allowed to rise to 65 degrees. Yes, I dress warmly. Thank ghodz for the flannel sheets, feather quilt, etc bought in better times, eh?

In the Summer, I have box fans and heavy/thick multiple-layer window coverings and make judicious use of them largely because there's no air conditioning.

Yes, the house has insulation to code and I've been using LED lightbulbs for years. Even so, the average monthly energy bills are - for the electricity \$64.70 after the 25% low-income discount and for the gas \$40 after the low-income discount. That's not counting water services, garbage & recycling services, telecomm (phone & internet) services. Remember the comment about income vs mortgage? And the fitness issues?

We need to have a reliable state-administered (not necessarily state-funded) funding source, independent from what is happening federally, that can help people like myself throughout the state. This bill is asking for a small increase in funding on a

per-invoice basis that, when multiplied by the number of invoicings per month, will hopefully make a significant difference in helping folks going through difficult times and help them feel human again. I'm happy to pay that fee on my bill if it means that others are healthy, in a warm home, and not fretting over their lights and heat being shut off like I have. It also makes me feel like I'm, in essence, reimbursing a loan granted to me.

OEAP is funded by every PGE & Pacific Power Customer. However, approximately 58,000 Oregon households were disconnected in 2024. That needs to stop and we - YOU - can make it stop. Let's pass HB 3972 and get this done!