

Submitter: David Beltran Barajas
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3792

Hello members of the Committee,

My name is David Beltran Barajas, I'm based out of House District 43. I'm here on behalf of a community member who could not be here today. Their name is BC Shelby, they're based out of House District 33.

BC is a wonderful community member I've gotten to know over the past few months. He's an older gentleman living off of his Social Security which totals a little more than 1200 Monthly. BC, like many Oregonians, has been struggling to pay his utilities. He is also living in an energy-burdened unit that has outdated cadet baseboard heaters and could benefit from better weatherization. His story is the same as many community members I've spoken with over the past few months. Every winter in a bid to stay warm, he gets hit with unaffordable bills, largely due to the back-to-back rate increases from utilities in the state. In January BC found himself struggling with several past due bills, and faced the threat of disconnection. He wasn't the only one, in 2024 we saw 58 Thousand Oregon Households disconnected, it's clear that energy is unaffordable, and something has to be done.

BC has difficulties writing and moving around, so he asked me to be here today to share his story and advocate in support of HB 3792. BC is one of thousands of Oregonians who would benefit from OEAP, and need this program to be healthy. This bill seeks to increase the small fee that all Pacific Power and PGE customers already pay. I believe this amounts to a few cents, It would go up to about a buck fifty.

With everything that is happening on the federal level, I think it's necessary that we have an assistance program that is independent and unaffected by the ripples being created in DC, And this bill is exactly that. HB 3792 is fully funded by Oregonians for Oregonians.

BC isn't struggling because he can't budget, BC gets a fixed income, that between rent, food, and energy is picked apart with nothing left over. BC, like so many Oregonians are being priced out of life through their utilities and other costs

It is undeniable that we have an issue with energy affordability in this state. So please, I urge this committee to pass HB 3792, so that we can keep OEAP well-funded for our struggling neighbors.

Thank you for your time and consideration!