



www.RogueClimate.org || PO Box 1980, Phoenix, OR 97535 || 541-301-9204

Coos Bay Office: 243 S. 2nd St. Coos Bay, OR 97420 || 541- 816-0758

Re: Rogue Climate Testimony regarding HB 3179,

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazen and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 3179: the FAIR Energy Act.

Rogue Climate serves and works alongside Southern Oregon and South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, and communities of color, by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, and a healthy environment. We do so through leadership development, political education, and campaigns for policies that benefit our communities.

Far too many people in Oregon are struggling to pay their energy bills. Since 2021, the state's largest for-profit utilities have raised residential billing rates by nearly 50%, focused almost solely on cost recovery for utilities. Households in rural communities are more likely to be energy burdened compared to the rest of the state, with [30-39% of households](#) in Jackson and Coos county facing severe energy burdens while also earning [less than \\$15,060 per year](#).

It is clear that Oregon must address the structural issues contributing to the energy affordability crisis. It's important for residential customers to know exactly where their money is going for things like infrastructure, wildfire safety, and repairs so they can hold utilities accountable and push for investments that truly benefit Oregonians. The FAIR Energy Act (HB 3179) is a crucial step in addressing these problems and protecting residential customers.

The bill would also help keep energy rates as low as possible and prevent increases during the winter, when household energy use and bills are at their highest. By avoiding back-to-back yearly rate hikes and reducing the risk of disconnections, it protects families from relying on unsafe heating methods like gas ovens or generators in the cold, or dangerously overheating in the summer without access to cooling.

As extreme weather events become more common, families in Southern Oregon and the South Coast are increasingly burdened by high energy costs, highlighting the urgent need for affordable, climate-resilient solutions. While serving as the service provider for the Community Heat Pump Deployment Program in Jackson County, Rogue Climate has heard firsthand from families—many with young children—who are forced to choose between using expensive plug-in appliances or enduring dangerously hot or cold temperatures just to



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keep their utility bills manageable. With wildfires on the rise across Oregon, even opening a window for no-cost cooling is no longer a safe option. In the past year, we've installed heat pumps in 35 single-family homes in designated environmental justice communities, helping to lower bills—but the demand far exceeds available resources. That's why the FAIR Energy Act is so critical: it ensures access to safe, affordable heating and cooling for all, especially as climate change continues to intensify these challenges.

Rogue Climate strongly supports HB 3179 as a necessary step toward creating a fairer, more resilient energy system for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Jess Grady-Benson, Organizing Director

Zoe Serrano, Legislative Coordinator