



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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3179. My name is Metzin Rodriguez, and I am Unite Oregon's Climate and Environmental Justice Policy Lead Coordinator. *I support HB 3179 to limits how often utilities can raise billing rates*, by spreading out utility rate increase requests to every 3 years by 2027, with added protections before 2027

Unite Oregon is led by people of color, immigrants, refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty. We work across the state to build a unified intercultural movement for justice, and we have over 5,000 members. At our annual statewide summit, members voiced urgent concerns about skyrocketing utility rate bills and the lack of clear information why these rate increases are happening-particularly during the winter times and wildfire season.

Because our goal is to address the needs for our communities, HB 3179 moves any rate increases out of winter, banning cost hikes between November 1 to March 31 when usage is highest, and bills are most expensive. In turn providing our communities with a safety net to prepare beforehand and addresses this issue from the root. Our communities are hit the hardest by rising utility costs, at the same time they are recovering from wildfires and winter storms and paying more than ever for basic needs.

HB 3179 will help by:

- **Providing affordable Bills:** Regulators can set billing rates as low as possible. Utilities have more flexibility for
- **Having fewer Increases:** No new increases in billing rates for at least 18 months. No more winter rate hikes.
- **More Transparency:** Utilities must publish upcoming bill increases each quarter. Utilities must show where customers' bills are being spent.

We must continue to have sustainable and affordable practices to make sure we are supporting our most vulnerable communities in times of necessity. When winter strikes, putting people first instead of rate increases - it enables a pathway to using healthy

heating practices that aren't putting our communities at risk both in health and economy.
We must evolve with the times - we ask of you.

*Sincerely,
Metzin Rodriguez
Unite Oregon*