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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Opinion Opposing Oregon HB 2025

Oregon House Bill 2025 (2023), which focuses on utilities, has sparked significant concern among residents and stakeholders due to its potential economic impact. While the bill aims to address utility-related issues, its approach raises serious questions about affordability, fairness, and long-term consequences for Oregonians.

One of the primary objections to HB 2025 is its substantial cost to families and businesses. Reports indicate that the bill could impose over \$1 billion annually in new taxes and fees, placing an undue burden on households already grappling with rising living costs. This financial strain could disproportionately affect low- and middle-income families, who may struggle to absorb additional expenses tied to utility services. Small businesses, already navigating tight margins, could face similar challenges, potentially leading to reduced operations or job cuts.

Furthermore, the bill's broad scope and lack of transparency regarding its specific provisions fuel skepticism. Without clear details on how funds will be allocated or how they will directly benefit consumers, there's a risk that the proposed taxes and fees may not translate into meaningful improvements in utility infrastructure or services. Oregonians deserve assurance that any new costs will lead to tangible benefits, such as enhanced reliability or sustainability, rather than bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Another concern is the potential for HB 2025 to stifle economic growth. By increasing the cost of utilities, the bill could discourage investment and innovation in Oregon's energy sector. Businesses and residents may face higher operational costs, which could drive companies to relocate to states with more favorable economic policies. This could undermine Oregon's competitiveness and hinder job creation.

In conclusion, while addressing utility challenges is important, HB 2025's approach appears to prioritize revenue generation over the well-being of Oregonians. A more balanced solution would involve targeted investments in infrastructure, transparent cost-benefit analyses, and policies that prioritize affordability.