

2/9/2026

Testimony in support of bill SB 1582

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sam Guthman, she/her, and I am testifying on behalf of APANO and APANO Action Fund; sibling, culturally-specific organizations that unites Asians and the communities who stand with us to build power, develop leaders and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development and cultural work. We are in strong support of Senate Bill 1582. This bill presents a critical opportunity for Oregon to **lower energy costs, strengthen grid reliability**, and expand access to clean energy through community-based power, also known as Virtual Power Plants. We urge you to vote YES on SB 1582.

Virtual Power Plants are networks of customer-owned energy resources—such as rooftop solar, battery storage, smart thermostats, and electric vehicles—that work together to support the electric grid. Instead of relying on costly new infrastructure, these existing technologies can shift energy use away from peak demand and deliver power exactly when and where it is needed. This approach is faster, more affordable, and *more resilient than traditional power plants*.

For Oregon families already struggling with rising utility bills, Virtual Power Plants deliver real savings. By reducing peak demand, VPPs displace the most expensive sources of electricity, lowering costs across the system for all ratepayers. National research shows that VPPs cost 40–60% less than other energy resources, and wide deployment could save ratepayers billions of dollars over the next decade. **These savings benefit renters, homeowners, small businesses, and rural communities alike.**

SB 1582 is especially important as it ensures these benefits are shared equitably. The bill directs the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to establish fair compensation so customers are paid appropriately for the value they provide to the grid. It guarantees open access so any utility customer who wants to participate—with solar, batteries, electric vehicles, or smart devices—has a clear right to do so. It also allows for additional incentives for low- and moderate-income households and environmental justice communities, building on investments Oregonians have already made through programs like the Energy Trust of Oregon.

Legislation is necessary to move beyond piecemeal utility pilot programs and establish a consistent, statewide framework to scale Virtual Power Plants quickly and fairly. SB 1582 sets clear expectations, timelines, and consumer protections while allowing innovation from third-party providers—driving competition, protecting customer data, and lowering costs for everyone.

**Centering community-based power creates local jobs across Oregon**, wherever these technologies are installed and maintained. This bill advances clean energy goals while expanding economic opportunity and energy independence in communities that have too often been left behind.

SB 1582 is a smart, practical solution that lowers costs, strengthens our grid, advances energy equity, and puts power—literally and figuratively—into the hands of Oregonians. For these reasons, APANO strongly urges your support.

Vote YES on SB 1582.

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