



Date: February 9, 2026
To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
From: Mike Powers, SEIU Local 503
RE: Support for SB 1588

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

My name is Mike Powers, and I represent SEIU Local 503. Our Union represents more than 70,000 workers in every county in Oregon, including public sector employees and care providers in homes and facilities. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1588.

Making Home Energy Upgrades Affordable

Many Oregon households want to make their homes more energy efficient or switch to cleaner technologies like heat pumps, rooftop solar, or battery storage. These upgrades lower energy bills and improve comfort. However, the biggest barrier for many families is the high upfront cost.

SB 1588 allows electric utilities to pay upfront for home energy efficiency and electrification upgrades. Customers then repay the cost over time through a charge on their utility bill.

Most importantly, the bill requires that the monthly charge must be less than the expected energy savings. This means customers start saving money right away without needing loans, credit checks, or large upfront payments.

This approach opens the door for:

- Middle-income households who cannot afford upfront costs
- Renters and residents who may not qualify for traditional financing
- Families facing rising energy bills

By removing the upfront cost barrier, SB 1588 makes clean energy upgrades available to far more Oregonians.

Guaranteed Savings for Customers

The Public Utility Commission (PUC) will oversee the program and may set minimum savings standards. Each project must deliver net bill savings, meaning the customer's total energy costs go down even after the repayment charge is added.

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This creates a win-win outcome: families lower their monthly bills, homes become more comfortable and efficient, and energy savings stay in local communities

Strengthening Oregon's Electric Grid

SB 1588 also helps Oregon make better use of the electric grid we already have. By expanding energy efficiency and smart electrification, SB 1588 helps:

- Reduce peak energy demand
- Lower strain on the grid
- Avoid costly infrastructure upgrades
- Improve system reliability and resilience

Instead of relying only on large new investments that can take years to build, this bill helps utilities make better use of the infrastructure already in place.

Lower Costs for All Ratepayers

When homes use energy more efficiently and reduce peak demand, utilities avoid expensive grid updates and the need for costly peak power generation is reduced. This helps keep power more affordable for all Oregonians.

Creating Local Jobs and Economic Benefits

Energy efficiency and electrification upgrades require more electricians, HVAC technicians, contractors, and installers. These are local, Oregon jobs that will stay in Oregon. This bill helps grow a skilled workforce while improving the comfort and efficiency of homes across the state.

Conclusion

SB 1588 is a practical, customer-focused solution that makes energy upgrades affordable, lowers monthly bills, strengthens the grid, and supports local jobs.

It removes upfront cost barriers, guarantees customer savings, and helps Oregon make better use of the electric system we already have.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your support for SB 1588.

Thank you for your time and consideration.