

Submitter: Serena Campas
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1588

For the record, my name is Serena Campas, senior policy associate with Rewiring America, a national nonprofit focused on building electrification and decarbonization. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1588.

This legislation exists at the nexus of Oregon's climate action goals and affordability. In a time where families across income levels are struggling to keep up with rising costs, energy efficiency offers a solution to bring down electric bills and demand on the grid. SB 1588 creates the Upgrade and Save program by which ratepayers can install energy efficiency measures such as a heat pump, weatherization, solar, and battery storage while the upfront cost is covered by their utility. The savings generated from the upgrades not only allow the cost to be recovered by the utility, but also are enjoyed by the ratepayer- which includes homeowners and renters alike.

The impacts of the proposed Upgrade and Save program can be substantial for Oregon residents. Per Rewiring America's modeling, as many as 110,000 homes could qualify for a new heat pump through the Upgrade and Save program- over a fifth of Oregon's heat pump installation commitment made as part of the US Climate Alliance. About half of those homes are located within PGE's service territory. The number of qualifying homes only increases when incentives such as rebates are considered, as well as the option for residents to participate in the program with a copay.

Heat pumps installed through the Upgrade and Save program can also be enrolled in a virtual power plant program, such as that being proposed through SB 1582, allowing utilities to load shave during peak demand. Upgrade and Save has a track record of success in other states, where utilities have been running similar programs for over 15 years and saving participants thousands on their energy bills.

Finally, the program offers savings to utilities and ratepayers by allowing utilities to treat the upgrades paid for through the program as an extension of their infrastructure. Investing in energy efficiency upgrades at the household level to bring down energy demand defrays the need to spend even more on costly infrastructure like poles and wires.

Thank you again for your time, and I urge your support on SB 1588.