

Senate Committee On Business and Transportation

Dear Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Thomsen and members of the committee,

I SUPPORT SB 1552 – Ratepayer Protection Act.

This bill is the Ratepayer Protection Act designed to cap costs for Oregon energy users and establish consistent policies aligned with keeping electric rates as low as possible. It furthers the mandate to PUC in ORS 756, to "protect the consumers from unjust and unreasonable extractions by establishing fair and reasonable rates."

PUC was established to protect ratepayers from an out-of-control monopoly. PUC's purpose and direction was clear until the legislature started interfering with energy standards that allowed utilities to roll down the costs. That has encouraged experimental programs that have not materialized in feasibility that ratepayers has to pay for.

Putting a cap on rate increases won't prevent innovative new experiments, but will curtail experiments with little projection of success. It will force utilities that have viable experiments to come to the state for feasibility study and funding.

The final section of the bill would stop the collection of the Klamath Dam removal from surcharging ratepayers' utility bills. I also support the amendment to direct the monies to be used for fish ladders or fish passage alternatives. This would aid in mitigating PacifiCorp's main problem with FERC re-licensing requirements.

SB 1552 is in the best interest of Oregon's economy and the ratepayers.

Donna Bleiler