

Submitter: Dan Kirschner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB868

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Findley, Members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide brief comments on the bills before the committee collectively referred to as the REBuild bills, S868, S869, S870 and S871.

The Northwest Gas Association (NWGA) represents the interests of the natural gas utilities and interstate pipelines that safely and dependably deliver essential energy to consumers across the Pacific Northwest, including Idaho, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. The three natural gas utilities and two pipelines in Oregon serve heat and hot water to 2.5 million residents and productive energy to 85,000 businesses, institutions and industries here.

We appreciate the work of the Resilient Buildings Task Force over the interim and its product as represented by these bills. We believe the package reflects a sincere attempt to capture policy areas where the task force was in consensus.

A number of ambiguities in these bills remain, however, and must be clarified in statute rather than left to further interpretation by the Department of Energy through rulemaking. To that end, the NWGA and its members are committed to perfecting these measures. We will continue engaging in order to avoid unintended consequences and to ensure that Oregonians benefit from a diversified and dependable energy system as we all work toward a low carbon future.

On a related note, the preamble to S868 notes, “Energy consumption in buildings is responsible for nearly 35 percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions in this state.” Here is more detail to that statistic from ODEQ’s 2021 GHG Inventory: Electricity consumption in buildings accounted for 21 percent of GHG emissions in the state in 2021. Emissions from the combustion of natural gas in buildings comprised 6.5% of the state’s total emissions.

In conclusion, the NWGA appreciates the work of the REBuild Task Force and the time each task force member dedicated to the effort, especially the leadership of Sens. Lieber and Findley, Reps. Marsh and Owens. More work needs to be done on these bills and we are committed to doing our part.

Dan Kirschner

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