



Oregon
Environmental
Council



February 1, 2022

Representative Pam Marsh, Chair
House Interim Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

RE: HB 4058-2 - SUPPORT

Chair Marsh and Committee Members,

The Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization that advances innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations. Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis. **On behalf of our thousands of members statewide, we urge you to support HB 4058 with the -2 amendment, a bill that will protect the health and safety of Oregon families by increasing access to life-saving and efficient cooling and air-filtration devices.**

As many as 100 people died across 28 Oregon cities during last summer's unprecedented climate-fueled heat wave. A majority of those people died alone in too-hot apartments because they did not have access to life-saving cooling technology. With extreme heat events becoming increasingly more common, we cannot wait to act to protect our communities and ensure all homes are resilient.

The Emergency Heat Relief for Communities bill (HB 4058-2) will help ensure our most vulnerable communities are prepared for and protected from future extreme heat and wildfire events by increasing access to life-saving cooling devices—energy efficient air conditioners and electric heat pumps—and air filtration devices. Establishing a program within the Oregon Department of Energy for the bulk purchase and installation of efficient electric heat pumps for low-income, rural, and other environmental justice communities in Oregon is a critical response to last year's heat wave and future expected extreme temperatures.

Efficient electric heat pumps provide a variety of additional critical benefits to communities and the climate. They are effective at both heating and cooling homes using less energy than traditional systems and cost less to run than lower efficiency alternatives. They do not emit toxic air pollutants and they produce less climate pollution than other heating and cooling appliances on the market. The climate benefits will only improve as we continue to transition our electric system to 100% clean energy sources.

As climate change causes more extreme weather and changes what people need to stay safe and healthy, we need to ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors—low-income families and renters, environmental justice populations, rural communities, seniors and people with disabilities—have access to life-saving cooling technologies. By increasing access to efficient, electric appliances, these bills will also help communities transition to cleaner, healthier living environments and cut climate-change causing pollution from buildings—Oregon's second biggest polluting sector.

The February short session is the legislature's last chance to act before the weather heats up and potentially more Oregon lives are at risk. Without knowing what this summer or the next has in store for us, we need our legislators to act now to protect our communities from extreme climate impacts.

Sincerely,

Nora Apter, Climate Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council

Meredith Connolly, Oregon Director
Climate Solutions