



February 22, 2023

House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
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Salem, Oregon 97301

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Dear Chair Marsh and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment:

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization working to deliver clean energy benefits to the Oregon customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista.

We deliver energy efficiency and small-scale renewable power incentives and services to people, businesses and communities, and to do so, we work with our utility partners, state agencies, a robust trade ally network and a growing community partner network. Since 2002 we have helped customers save and generate more than 1,000 average megawatts of clean energy, which will importantly reduce customer utility bills by almost \$7 billion.

Pursuant to our agreement with the Oregon Public Utility Commission, to whom we report, Energy Trust does not advocate in support of or opposition to legislation. It is in that non-advocacy spirit that we offer these comments on HB 3166.

Clean energy incentives and programs are delivered through a variety of entities, many with overlapping geographies, fuel types and customer characteristics, and each program often applies its own criteria. For instance, Energy Trust delivers cost-effective electric energy efficiency and renewable power programs in PGE and Pacific Power service areas, the “public utilities” listed in HB 3166, but we don’t serve electric customers in consumer-owned utility service areas, the “private utilities”.

We also serve natural gas customers of NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista, some of whom live in consumer-owned utility service areas. But we do not serve customers who use propane or home heating oil as neither of those customers pay into the tariffs that fund our work. Alternatively, customers utilizing heating oil are served by Oregon Housing and Community Services’ State Home Oil Weatherization program, while OHCS also serves low-income households with weatherization and energy efficiency services through state, utility and federal funding.

This variety of programs and administering entities can lead to customers, contractors and community partners having difficulties learning about the programs, understanding their eligibility, investing in eligible equipment and applying for their incentive, rebate or tax credit. Add in the \$114 million allocated for Oregon in the Inflation Reduction Act rebate programs plus the millions in available tax credits and other federal programs, these offerings are only going to get more complex.

Simplifying Oregonians’ understanding of, and access to, these energy-saving offers could benefit everyone, from the utility system to homeowners and renters and the contractors and community organizations who serve them.

In our experience, coordinating across funding programs and entities is not unique to energy efficiency, but also exists in the myriad of other industries that energy connects to, including water conservation and the healthcare industry.

As an example, over the last year, Energy Trust convened a workgroup to examine the intersection of energy efficiency programs and public health programs. The workgroup involved Coordinated Care Organizations, community action agencies and Oregon Health Authority. Chair Marsh was kind enough to participate. Our deliberations revealed that energy consumers face significant barriers, and a sometimes bewildering array of choices, depending upon such factors as income, address, fuel choice and type of residence, to name a few of the energy determiners. The household and public health variables are even more numerous.

At the end of our meetings the one thing everyone agreed upon was that Oregonians could benefit from a navigator to guide them through the process.

Should the state of Oregon establish a policy designating a single resource to provide energy efficiency information and technical assistance to consumers, Energy Trust would be an eager partner. We would be pleased to be able to contribute our experience, data and program expertise to support the effort in any way we can.

Thank you,

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Energy Trust of Oregon