



House Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection

Testimony in Support of HB 3792

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AARP is pleased to support HB 3792 with the -2 Amendments. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50+ to choose how they live as they age. AARP Oregon advocates on issues important to our 500,000 Oregon members with a focus on health security, financial resilience and livable communities.

The reality is that many older Oregonians, especially those on fixed incomes, struggle to afford utility bills, especially in light of rising costs of living. Energy costs can be a significant burden, especially during peak heating and cooling seasons, which Oregon has seen far more of in recent years. In the past few years, energy bills from PGE and Pacific Power have increased by nearly 50% and the result has been an *increase* in disconnects.

The average social security income is \$1,550 a month and for over 40% of recipients that amount makes up 90% of their household income. According to AARP Oregon Vital Voices Survey, nearly 45% of people said that the costs of heating and cooling impacts their ability to remain in and age in their homes.

At a cost of \$1.50 per month to ratepayers HB 3792 would double the annual funding for the Oregon Home Energy Assistance Program from \$20 million to \$40 million. Given the rapid escalation in utility rates in Oregon, HB 3792 will help older Oregonians not only pay their bills but stay in their homes.

We urge this committee to adopt the -2 Amendments and pass HB 3792.