

PGE Comments on SB 868, SB 869, and SB 870

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Matt Tidwell, Environmental Policy Manager at PGE, served on last year's Resilient Efficient Buildings Task Force, co-chaired by Senator Lieber and Representative Marsh. The diversity of thought and expertise of the 27 members who sat on the task force led to robust discussions to identify and evaluate policies related to building codes and building decarbonization for new and existing buildings that would enable this state to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. The process allowed for a lot of differing opinions and ultimately resulted in a set of policies in the final report that was supported by a majority of the task force members. PGE voted to approve the final set of recommended policies, which subsequently led to the bills now being considered by the committee: SB 868, SB 869, SB 870, and SB 871.

SB 868

Given the role electric heat pumps are currently playing and will continue to play in Oregon's decarbonization efforts, PGE finds much to support in SB 868. As has been done in other states, setting a state goal for the deployment of heat pumps sends a much-needed signal to the market, including to heat pump manufacturers, distributors, contractors, businesses, and building owners. Heat pumps are crucial for lowering bills, improving comfort and reducing inefficiencies from other heating and cooling sources. The bill smartly recognizes financial and other barriers, and directs the Oregon Department of Energy to collaborate with other agencies to provide technical assistance and training as well as to assist with navigating various funding sources for acquiring and installing efficient appliances for heating and cooling. PGE also appreciates the need to prioritize the highest efficiency heating and cooling appliances, which will contribute to lower costs for all utility customers because of a more efficient electric grid.

SB 869

PGE supports alignment at the Department of Consumer and Business Services with helping to facilitate the state's achievement of greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. PGE also supports the new focus on embodied carbon of materials used in building construction as well as the setting of ambitious goals for energy efficiency in new buildings.

SB 870

PGE supports the state establishing a building performance standard for Tier 1 buildings and energy benchmarking for Tier 2. PGE finds it critical for any energy use intensity targets to exclude energy delivered for charging of electric vehicles so that building owners and manager are not inadvertently penalized for that energy consumption.

We look forward to reviewing the next round of amendments and appreciate the work of Sen Lieber and Rep Marsh on the package.

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