

To: Representative Pam Marsh (Chair) and House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

RE: House Bill 4058 – Emergency Heat Relief for Communities

Date: 2/2/2022

Chair Marsh and members of the committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 4058. The tragic consequences of the extreme heat that hit Oregon in the summer of 2021 resulted in over 100 Oregonians dying, many were renters. Previously, I thought climate change would primarily affect other people living in other locations, we were largely safe. I thought taking climate action was the right thing to do save other people from flooding or severe storms. In 2021, I came to the realization that we need to take climate action not just for others, but to save Oregonians from dying preventable deaths from extreme heat brought on by climate change.

In Portland, Earth Advantage is working with the City of Portland and community-based organizations to install 15,000 energy efficient portable heat pump units over the next few years to address the need for emergency cooling in priority households. We believe that policy is a good first step in reaction to the 2021 heat events. House Bill 4058 provides for a more comprehensive state-wide policy, which would be another positive step forward in addressing this challenge. House Bill 4058 will do multiple things, it:

- Provides \$5 million to Oregon Health Authority for emergency air conditioner and air filtration deployment to complement existing wildfire work.
- Provides \$10 million to Oregon Department of Energy for efficient heat pump incentives prioritized to low-income and environmental justice communities, especially rural communities who utilize bulk fuels like wood, oil, and propane or the electric resistance heating which is commonly found in many manufactured homes.
- Acknowledges that the technologies that keep families safe during heat waves, cold snaps, and bad air quality days can cause energy bill spikes and work must be done to alleviate this.

All of these actions will enable more Oregonians to have access to life-saving cooling when they need it. They also allow Oregonians to invest in solutions to save energy and have homes with cleaner air. There has never been a greater need for these policies.

Sincerely,



David Heslam  
Executive Director