



THE BEAR FACTS

The Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon
newsletter for members and friends

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December 1987

CUB takes stand on PUDs, energy planning

Joining together with the Northwest Conservation Act Coalition (NCAC) and the Solar Energy Association of Oregon (SEA of O), the CUB Board of Governors met at a conference in October to discuss important energy issues for Oregon and the Northwest. The three groups met and heard panel discussions on utility promotional policies and on the practice of granting "incentive rates" to industrial utility customers.

The keynote speaker was newly-appointed Public Utility Commissioner Ron Eachus, who spoke about the process of determining new policies for the three member commission.

Least-Cost Energy Planning

The CUB Board, along with the Boards of NCAC and SEA of O, adopted a resolution in support of least-cost energy planning. The resolution, which calls for the PUC to require that the least expensive means of power production be pursued by utility companies, was presented to Commissioner Eachus at the conference. Least-cost planning is a strategy that promotes energy conservation.



Idaho Utility Commissioner Perry Swisher (second from left) speaks on utility promotional policies at October conference. Eric Stachon, CUB Chairperson (left) moderates while Bill Robertson, Pacific Power & Light Vice President, and Jean Reeder, Eugene Water & Electric Board General Manager look on. Portland attorney Dan Meek (not pictured) also spoke.

Energy assistance program delay

Two important resolutions were also passed at the November CUB Board of Governors meeting in Eugene. The first resolution was adopted in response to the delay of the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). The resolution calls for the PUC to adopt emergency rules regarding heating utility shutoffs and bill collection practices in the month of December. LIEAP is a federal program that helps pay heating bills of people facing shutoffs in the winter months.

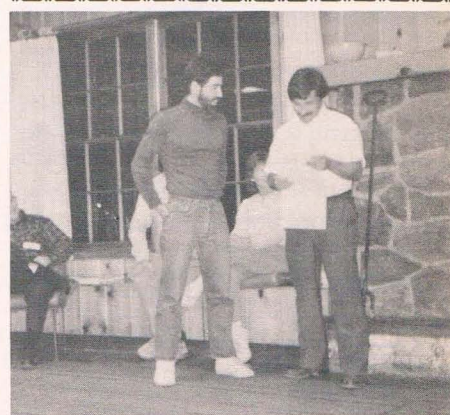
Pioneer People's Utility Districts

The Board also voted in support of the campaign to establish two People's Utility Districts in Portland. The resolution in support of the choice of public power was adopted following presentations from Dorothy Rothrock of Portland General Electric and Dan Meek of the Pioneer PUD campaign.

The resolution states that CUB "endorses and urges approval of the formation of each of the Pioneer People's Utility Districts . . . and will

support an affirmative vote by voters within such districts to establish the choice of public power in Portland."

The February issue of the Bear Facts will feature an in-depth article on the campaign for Pioneer PUD.



Public Utility Commissioner Ron Eachus (right) reads CUB's resolution in support of least-cost energy planning.

Future Board activities

In December, the CUB Board will be meeting with Public Utility Commissioners Ron Eachus, Nancy Ryles, and Paul Cook to discuss topics of concern to CUB. The meeting was initiated by the Commission as part of a series of meetings between the PUC and organizations concerned about utility issues in Oregon.

The meeting will be at 10:00 am, December 21st in the hearing room of the Labor & Industries Building in Salem. The CUB Board of Governors meeting will follow at 1:00 pm in room 257 of the State Capitol.

The New Year will bring the election season for the CUB Board. All CUB members are eligible to run for seats on the Board. Watch the February issue of "the Bear Facts" for candidate filing forms and details about the elections.

CUB canvass reaches out to members

Who's that knocking at your door? If you live in the Portland metropolitan area, it may be CUB. In November, CUB began its membership outreach program with the goal of doubling CUB's membership in the coming year.

Representatives of CUB's new outreach staff goes door-to-door in neighborhoods giving people information about CUB and asking them become members of CUB or to renew their memberships. Increasing CUB's membership means that CUB's voice will be even stronger in representing Oregon's utility consumers.

Josh Silverman, director of the outreach staff, emphasizes the importance of building CUB's membership from the

grassroots. 'There's just no substitute for personal contact. People talking to people about common concerns gener-

In the first three weeks of the project over 400 new members joined CUB

ates support and enthusiasm for CUB.'

"The public response has been great. In the first 3 weeks of the canvass project 400 new members joined CUB," Silverman said.

Because CUB has not been able to use the utility bills as a way to reach ratepayers, canvassing will provide a good method of reaching a large number of people. Not only does CUB reach a wide audience through canvassing, but this personal contact means that ratepayers have a chance to ask questions about CUB. Currently CUB only has the resources to canvass in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties. However, during the summer months, CUB will consider sending canvassers to other areas of the state as well.



CUB Canvasser Allen Chalfen explains CUB's work to prospective CUB member Amie Carrie.



Education fund allows tax deductible donations

As the New Year approaches, some CUB members ask whether tax-deductible contributions may be made to CUB. As many of our members know, CUB membership is not tax-deductible. However, tax-deductible contributions may be made to the CUB Educational Fund.

The CUB Educational Fund is a tax-exempt project which will work on fighting unfair rate increases and on educational projects. Possible projects in 1988 include the production and distribution of a Utility Consumers Rights Handbook, and developing special materials to be used in CUB's new membership outreach campaign (see article above).

In 1987, CUB members donated more than \$3,000 to this fund.

Contributions to the Educational Fund can be made by sending the attached coupon, along with a check made payable to CUB Educational Fund to: CUB, PO Box 6345, Portland, OR 97228.

CUB members should be informed that, due to a change in tax regulations, you must itemize in order to take a tax-deduction for charitable contributions.

Yes! I want to support the CUB Educational Fund. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of \$_____. Please send me a receipt for my tax records.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Make check payable to: CUB Educational Fund and mail to PO Box 6345, Portland, OR 97228.

Lifeline aids low-income & deaf consumers

The Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP), sometimes known as 'lifeline' which was supported by CUB in the 1987 Legislative session, has begun its 25 cent per-line surcharge on telephone bills.

CUB originally supported funding the program through a surcharge on long distance calls. By placing the charge on toll calls, approximately

Chairperson Eric Stachon said "We all benefit from having the maximum number of people on the phone system as possible, because it allows everyone to be able to more easily communicate with a greater number of people."

The old lifeline program, which was instituted in 1986 by former PUC Commissioner Gene Maudlin, only

the eligibility conditions and the final amount of the subsidy. In addition, HB 2663 allows the PUC to set up a system for minimizing deposit and installation charges for ratepayers who qualify for OTAP.

— Provides special telephone equipment for approximately 24,000 Oregonians with hearing or speech defects. A message relay center will also be established to allow people with this equipment to make calls to standard telephones (such as doctors' offices, governments agencies, etc).

— Prevents shutoffs to people who are "medically needy" when the absence of a phone may endanger their health.

"The Oregon program will be one of the most comprehensive lifeline programs in the country, and will go a long way toward making phone service is available to all Oregonians," Stachon said.

The Oregonian recently announced their support of the OTAP program in an editorial stating "Any program that seeks to provide universal telephone access for all Oregonians increases the value of the telephone for all users. In our society, the telephone is not a luxury item, but rather an essential communications tool. In some cases, it is an essential instrument of survival."

If you would like more information on OTAP or the PUC hearings, contact the PUC's toll-free consumer hotline at 1(800)522-2404.

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one-third of the program would have been paid for by a handful of large-volume long distance customers. However, the utilities lobbied hard for the surcharge to be placed on all ratepayers.

Although disappointed in the funding mechanism, CUB has continued to support the lifeline program as essential to providing universal telephone service to all Oregonians. CUB

applied to senior citizens (over 60) who were qualified for foodstamps. The new program, passed by the Legislature in House Bill 2663, expanded OTAP to include low-income people of all ages, and the hearing and speech impaired.

CUB is continuing to represent ratepayers in hearings about lifeline before the PUC. These hearings will assist the Commission in developing guidelines for determining eligibility for the program and the amount of the subsidy to be given.

The OTAP has three components:
— Establishes a minimum subsidy of \$4 per month for qualified low-income ratepayers. The PUC will determine

CUB Wish List

With the beginning of our new outreach program, CUB has outgrown our small office and will be moving to larger quarters this month. Along with the increase in staff and new office space has come the need for more office furniture and equipment. In order to keep down our costs, CUB is first asking our members for donations of office equipment and furniture. The following is CUB's "wish list":

- 2 office desks
- Office chairs
- Shelves
- File cabinets
- Large bulletin board
- Literature rack (for magazines, newsletters, brochures)
- Room dividers
- Light table
- Card Files

If you or your business would like to donate office items to CUB, please call Barbara Head at 227-1984. Donations of some items may be tax-deductible.

Thanks to members for generosity

CUB sends a sincere thank you to the hundreds of CUB members who showed their continued support by contributing donations of \$1 to \$100 to CUB's "special appeal" in November and early December.

CUB sent the special appeal to our members asking for donations to help cover the cost of CUB's victory against Portland General Electric. After 18 months of diligent work by CUB's attorney and expert witness, the PUC recently ruled that PGE must return \$127 million in excess profits and tax credits to its ratepayers. This \$127 million will be used to offset future rate increases over the next 20 years.

Over \$7,000 has been received so far as a result of this appeal! "Everyone at CUB appreciates the generosity of our members and the kind notes of support

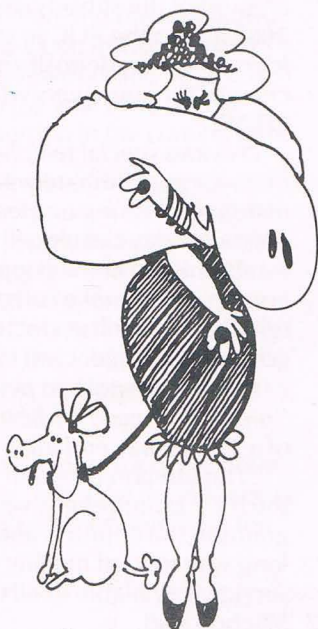
that people sent in with their contributions" said Barbara Head, CUB Executive Director.

**CUB Board of Governors
Monday, Dec. 21, 1987
Salem, OR**

**10:00 am Meeting with
PUC Commissioners
Labor & Industries Bldg.**

**1:00 pm Board Meeting
State Capitol
Room 257**

Give CUB for the Holidays!



For the woman who has EVERYTHING and the man who has NOTHING

CUB BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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896-3298

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Boring, OR 97009
637-3549

I want to give a CUB membership as a gift to:

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

Please notify my friend of this gift as soon as possible.

(CUB membership dues range from \$5 to \$100.)

Mail this coupon along with a check made payable to CUB to: PO Box 6345, Portland, OR 97228.



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