

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 26, 2025

**Expanding Energy Assistance (HB 3792) Heads to Governor's Desk**

*As federal energy assistance remains uncertain, Oregon Legislators pass a bill to double funds for the Oregon Energy Assistance Program for PGE and Pacific Power customers.*

SALEM, OR —Today, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3792, a bill that doubles funding for the Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP) to \$40 million, with strong bipartisan support. This program protects qualifying customers of Portland General Electric (PGE) and Pacific Power from having their service disconnected when they fall behind on their electric bills. This will be the first permanent increase in OEAP funding in nearly a decade. HB 3792 now heads to the Governor's desk to be signed into law.

"The Legislature is taking action now to help fixed-income Oregonians from losing their electricity during cold spells in February or record high temperatures in July and August," said **Rep. Tom Andersen (D - South Salem), Chief Sponsor** of the bill introduced in February. "Disconnections should not be a collection mechanism for our most at-risk Oregonians."

"SEI is extremely grateful to our legislators for recognizing the significance of this need and acting to address it," said **Sahaan McKelvey, Director of Advocacy & Engagement at Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI)**, a Portland energy assistance provider. "With energy costs continuing to rise at an alarming rate and shut-offs at an all-time high, SEI is thrilled that we will be able to maximize our ability to serve our community members who need this vital support."

**Utility bills for both PGE and Pacific Power have significantly increased in recent years**, far ahead of the pace of inflation. OEAP is a crucial safety net in the face of this. As bills have gone up, neither utility offers customers programs to relieve or manage their past due bills, leading to rising power shutoffs. Most of the energy bill increases are the result of needed investments for wildfire expenses, modernizing infrastructure, and the growth of large-scale data centers.

"I would like to thank the Oregon legislature for passing HB 3792," said **Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson**. "Preventing utility shutoffs for low-income households prevents evictions, keeps families stable, and ensures people can stay safe in their homes. This legislation is needed now because utility bill assistance programs are under threat from federal budget cuts – this is the right time to take action that protects Oregonians."

"HB 3792 passing sends a clear message: Oregon believes in supporting our neighbors. Strengthening OEAP is a win for families, stability, and energy justice," said **Anahí Segovia Rodriguez, Energy Justice Coordinator for Verde**.

The passage of this bill comes at a time when federal funding for energy assistance is uncertain. In April, the [federal government fired the entire staff in charge of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#). As of May, only 4 staff members remain. For decades, this program has provided essential relief funds to those who cannot afford their energy bills.

“Energy assistance has a transformative impact on the lives of low-income Oregonians,” said **Kemp Shuey, Board President of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon**. “As the stability of federal resources like the Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program remains uncertain, we are very glad to have bipartisan support for expanding energy assistance resources that will keep people safe in their homes.”

“We have been well overdue for expanding the funds to help our neighbors stay safe and healthy with power. This bill will help hundreds of families who would otherwise have their electricity disconnected. Even better, customers receiving this help will automatically be registered for a discount program, allowing them to better manage their bills going forward,” said **Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy & Program Director for Oregon Citizens’ Utility Board**. “Between rising energy costs and federal support at risk, HB 3792 came when it was most needed.”

The Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services (OHCS), which administers the program, reports that from fiscal years 2017-2022, of the 85,470 PGE and Pacific Power households who received OEAP:

- 52% had children at home
- 25% were single mothers
- 36% had a family member with a disability
- 79% were renters
- 6% were veterans
- 92% used the funds to avoid being disconnected

HB 3792 was supported by a coalition of more than 20 human service agencies, consumer organizations, community-based organizations, and city representatives. HB 3792 passed the Oregon House on June 24, 2025. With the Oregon Senate’s vote, the bill now heads to the Governor’s desk to be signed into law.

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