

Making utilities  
affordable,  
accessible,  
reliable, and  
clean for people  
in Oregon.



# The Bear Facts

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
OREGON CITIZENS' UTILITY BOARD

Spring 2023

Dear CUB Members,

I for one am looking forward to spring. Spring for me means getting back into the garden, more sunlight, and warmer weather. This has been a difficult winter for Oregonians. We've seen continued trends of severe winter weather causing downed power lines. I also want to recognize that winter heating bills have been challenging to manage, particularly as wages continue to stagnate.

**CUB's entire purpose is to help you, everyday people in Oregon with utility bills to pay.** We've certainly had our work cut out for us in the face of globally skyrocketing energy costs. We know many are struggling to make ends meet while utilities continue to ask for rate increases.

**This spring gives me hope, though. Not only for warmer weather and lowering our thermostats but also for new programs and CUB work on the horizon.** This year, we will see significant funding from the federal government geared towards energy efficiency upgrades for our homes and businesses (page 1).

In this newsletter, you'll also read about **CUB's work to protect utility consumers** in the legislature (page 2) and through Oregon's clean energy transition (page 3). We'll also be **pushing back on more rate increase requests** coming down the line and continuing to **bolster low-income bill discount programs** as the year progresses.

For now, here's to warmer weather and big victories on the horizon.



Regards,

Bob Jenks

Executive Director, Oregon CUB

## Energy Efficiency Incentives Coming to Oregon

New federal funding offers **billions of dollars in tax credits and rebates for energy upgrades starting this year!**

Tax credits are now available for weatherization investments and energy-efficient appliances like heat pumps, as well as solar panels. Rebates on energy-efficient appliances will also include heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, induction stoves, and more.

**These incentives will help people in Oregon access huge savings on our energy bills.** CUB is watching the rollout of these new programs and will provide more information as they become available.

610 SW Broadway  
Suite 400  
Portland, OR  
97205

(503)227-1984  
oregoncub.org



## Utility Consumer Protection Bill (HB 3152)

Climate change threatens to further increase utility bills. Oregon's **utilities must be held accountable** to meet climate goals while protecting customers. This bill will direct state utility regulators to **keep utilities on track with climate goals** and **move the cost of expanding fossil fuels to shareholders, not households**. We're already seeing major opposition from gas utilities like NW Natural who want to keep the status quo.

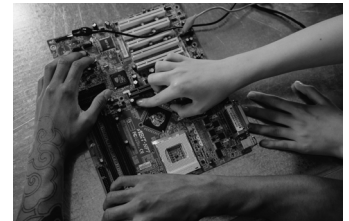


## Building Resiliency Package (SB 868, SB 869, SB 870, and SB 871)

Buildings are the second largest and longest-lasting source of climate pollution in Oregon. More efficient buildings can **significantly lower energy bills** while making our homes more comfortable. These bills will improve state programs to **support electric heat pumps**, improve **codes for new construction**, and add other **building efficiency measures**.

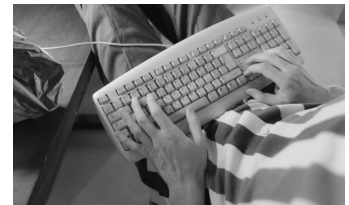
## Right to Repair (SB 542)

Repairing items you already own is less expensive and better for the environment. This bill expands your **ability to repair** consumer electronic equipment by requiring that manufacturers allow **access to parts, tools, and repair manuals** so you can fix what you already own.



## Oregon Broadband Funding Bill (HB 3201)

Oregon needs **better broadband internet** for rural communities. To improve broadband access, we need more infrastructure throughout the state. This bill will allow Oregon programs to use **millions in federal funding** for these investments.



## Oregon Energy Strategy (HB 2534 and SB 126)

Over the past few years, Oregon has adopted many measures to meet climate goals. With this work happening in so many different agencies, fossil fuel utilities are starting to use this siloed work to avoid accountability. This bill will **increase transparency** and **unify climate efforts** across the state.





## Gas Utilities Put Customers At Risk in the Face of Climate Regulation

Gas customers are at risk as gas utilities attempt to **reduce their companies' climate impact while continuing to grow their business**, according to a new report released by state utility regulators.

Oregon has adopted climate regulations that require Oregon's three gas utilities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2035 and 90% by 2050. State utility regulators found that the cost and risks of meeting these goals could be substantial. **But we have tools to help manage that risk to customers.**

### CUB and Regulators are Pushing for Better Planning from Gas Utilities

In late 2022, NW Natural filed its long-term resource plan with state utility regulators. As Oregon moves forward in reducing climate pollution from our energy systems, this plan will have long-lasting impacts on meeting state goals.

The main question gas utilities need to address in their plans is **how is NW Natural going to meet climate regulations** that require emission reductions through 2050. CUB does not think NW Natural has answered this question at all. Instead, **the gas utility uses completely unrealistic assumptions to suggest it can continue to grow its system while slashing its carbon emissions.** State regulators agree and are asking tough questions of Oregon's largest gas utility.

Over the next few months, **CUB will continue to push NW Natural to make a realistic plan.** We will be working hard to make sure that the gas utility is not harming customers by making risky investments.

## Welcome New CUB Staff!



**Cassie Allen**  
(she/her)

**Development  
Associate**

Cassie has professional experience in nonprofit fundraising, advocacy, and in community engagement. She is passionate about building relationships and making complex ideas simple to build movements.

When not working, Cassie can be found reading, cooking, or kayaking down Oregon's rivers.



**John Garrett**  
(he/him)

**Utility  
Analyst**

John specializes in a broad analysis of utility proposals across various project areas, including rate-making and resource planning. He holds a Master of Public Policy focused on energy development and policy.

John's favorite pastimes include outdoor exploration of all flavors, playing guitar, skating, and cooking.



**Charlie Krouse**  
(they/them)

**Outreach  
Associate**

Charlie has worked in climate and reproductive justice policy for eight years. They spent five years teaching college students how to advocate for climate justice policy in the Oregon Capitol.

When not at work Charlie does yoga and likes to hike with their dog around Oregon.



**Oregon CUB**

610 SW Broadway, Suite 400  
Portland, OR 97205

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

PAID

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## CenturyLink Landline Service is Under Investigation

Over the past year, regulators have received complaints about CenturyLink's landline telephone service. After investigating, regulators ordered the company to make major changes. Instead of fixing the issue, CenturyLink is now challenging the order.

CUB is fighting that challenge and will work to ensure that all CenturyLink customers in Oregon have reliable access to telephone service. We know that in an emergency, reliable phone service can be lifesaving. CenturyLink must be held accountable.

### **Are you a CenturyLink landline customer with service issues?**

Let regulators know by filing a complaint at [www.oregon.gov/PUC!](http://www.oregon.gov/PUC!)



# Oregon CUB

#### **In this issue of the CUB Newsletter:**

- Energy Efficiency Incentives Coming to Oregon
- CUB Works to Protect Consumers in the Oregon Legislature
- Gas Utilities Put Customers At Risk in the Face of Climate Regulation