



OFFICE OF SENATOR DEB PATTERSON

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**Oregon Senator Deb Patterson and Colleagues Request Power
Companies Keep Service Connected for Struggling Families**

*While the federal government disrupts nutrition assistance and other resources, Oregonians
should not have to choose between food and heat or light*

SALEM, OR – Thousands of households across Oregon are hurting financially during the federal government shutdown, from federal workers not getting paid to families whose food benefits have been delayed or threatened. Oregon **Senator Deb Patterson (D – Salem)** today called on the state's Public Utility Commission to help ease some of the pressure on these Oregonians, asking the commission to prevent utility shut-offs against customers behind on their bills during the federal government shutdown.

"It's good news that November food assistance has been unblocked through a court order, but the continuing federal shutdown puts the future of SNAP and other benefits at risk," said **Senator Patterson**. "No family should face the impossible choice between putting food on the table or heating their home in cold weather. Disconnecting people from their utilities in this extraordinarily difficult time will make it even tougher for families to stay afloat."

Seventeen other state Senators and Representatives joined Senator Patterson in her request, [signing onto a letter](https://bit.ly/PUC-letter) (bit.ly/PUC-letter) asking the Oregon Public Utility Commission adopt policies that help keep customers connected throughout the shutdown. The message noted that the federal shutdown also threatens Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds now and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits as the shutdown continues.

In addition to going to the Public Utility Commission, copies of the letter were delivered to executives at PacifiCorp, PGE, NW Natural, Idaho Power, and Cascade Natural.

"The shutdown, along with other executive decisions from Washington, is making life harder for working families already struggling to get by," said **Senator Jeff Golden (D – Rogue Valley)**. "They've done nothing to deserve this. Whether the PUC takes action or the utility companies act independently to help customers whose bills keep mounting, our communities need relief."

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