



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Oregon Senate Agrees Utility Ratepayers Deserve Easy Access to Customer Support and Complaint Resolution

Help with utility problems is at consumers' fingertips under HB 3156

SALEM, OR – When Oregonians aren't satisfied with their local utility's resolution of a problem or response to a complaint, they should know about the consumer assistance the Public Utility Commission can provide. Legislation passed in the Oregon Senate today puts that assistance within reach, requiring every public utility to publish the consumer services phone number and complaint form web address on every bill.

"We all know how frustrating it is to jump through hoops hoping to get a billing error corrected or a service problem resolved," said **Senator Kathleen Taylor (D – SE Portland & Milwaukie), chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business**. "The good news is our state has a program that helps Oregonians navigate these challenges with utility companies, and through our action today more people will know how to access it."

The Oregon Public Utility Commission regulates rates for many electric utilities, natural gas providers, and water companies in the state. The PUC's Consumer Services Unit assists consumers in their disputes with regulated utilities, as well as some wireless and broadband providers.

In testimony submitted for a Senate committee hearing on HB 3156, the commission noted their Consumer Services Unit staff does not only resolve consumer complaints. They also recognize and elevate potential failures to comply with regulations and collect data that is valuable when commissioners consider the utilities' requests for rate increases.

The measure originated in the Oregon House of Representatives where the chief sponsor was **Representative Jami Cate (R – Lebanon)**.

"Programs to help consumers fail to achieve their purpose if consumers don't know the help is available. This bill is a commonsense step to ensure consumers know they have avenues for recourse when utility companies fail to meet their needs," said **Rep. Cate**. "Plain and simple, awareness is good governance."

The Senate passed House Bill 3156 in a unanimous vote and it now heads to the Governor's desk for her signature.

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