



## Media Release

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### OREGON PUC APPROVES FIRST-EVER INCOME-QUALIFIED UTILITY DISCOUNT, PGE CUSTOMERS FIRST TO BENEFIT

Additional regulated electric, natural gas utilities expected to propose similar programs

**SALEM, Ore.** – The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) approved Portland General Electric’s (PGE’s) program to offer income-qualifying residential customers an ongoing discount to their monthly electric bills effective April 18, 2022. To qualify, customers must self-certify that their total household income is at or below 60 percent of the state median income level.

House Bill 2475, passed during Oregon’s 2021 Legislative Session, gave the PUC authority to consider the financial burden of energy costs when making decisions about rates, bill credits, and program discounts for customers of investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities. This bill, known as the Energy Affordability Act, allows the PUC to consider equity in the ratemaking process to make energy more affordable for Oregonians and less of a financial burden.

“This is the first program of its kind in Oregon to help provide relief to families who typically pay a higher percentage of their income to cover the cost of necessary utility services,” said Megan Decker, PUC Chair. “PGE and organizations resourced to participate on behalf of utility customers worked together to develop a program that adds a layer of equity not historically available in energy rates.”

The monthly bill discounts are calculated as a percentage of the bill and are offered at three levels based on total household income when compared to the state median income (SMI) level. Customers wishing to apply will be asked to declare their qualifying household income level at the time of enrollment. View the current Oregon SMI energy assistance eligibility matrix at [oregon.gov/ohcs/energy-weatherization/Pages/utility-bill-payment-assistance.aspx#e-eligibility](https://oregon.gov/ohcs/energy-weatherization/Pages/utility-bill-payment-assistance.aspx#e-eligibility).

Program Level	Total Household Income	Percentage of Bill Discount
Tier 1	At or below 30% of SMI	25% discount
Tier 2	31%-45% SMI	20% discount
Tier 3	46%-60% SMI	15% discount

“The benefit to a percentage bill discount compared to a flat rate is that the amount of discount increases or decreases depending on the size of the customer’s bill. This is especially beneficial during winter heating and summer cooling seasons when bills are higher,” added Chair Decker. “The tiered discount approach offers the highest level of discount each month for those in the greatest need.”

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Docket No.: [ADV 1365](#)

The costs of providing this discount program are to be paid by PGE customers through a new charge on monthly bills across all customer types. Residential customers will see an additional charge of 23 cents per bill, a 0.22% increase on an average bill of 780 kilowatt hours.

PGE customers interested in learning more about help available for monthly energy bills and to register for the income-qualified bill discount program should visit [portlandgeneral.com/iqbd](http://portlandgeneral.com/iqbd) or call 503-228-6322 or 800-542-8818.

In addition to the income-qualified bill discount program, PGE customers who are behind in payments or struggling to pay monthly utility bills may qualify for other energy assistance programs. Energy assistance programs or debt relief programs provide short-term assistance to help customers get utility payments up to date and avoid disconnection. Customers are encouraged to contact PGE for additional information and to be connected to additional resources.

The PUC is expecting similar income-based programs to be filed by other investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities later this year. NW Natural filed a similar discount program with the PUC earlier this week.

The PUC regulates customer rates and services of the state's investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities, including PGE, Idaho Power, Pacific Power, Avista, Cascade Natural, and NW Natural. The PUC also regulates landline telephone providers and select water companies. The PUC's mission is to ensure Oregon utility customers have access to safe, reliable, and high quality utility services at just and reasonable rates. For more information about the PUC, visit [oregon.gov/puc](http://oregon.gov/puc).

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