

**Presentation of Petitions to Oregon Public Utility
Commission (OPUC) for 4/9/13 hearing in Salem**

Carola Lacey

My name is ~~Carola Lacey~~, and I am here to present you with a petition signed by more than 1400 Oregonians. We are petitioning the Public Utility Commission to enact a year-round Moratorium to prohibit disconnections for those whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line.

I LIVE

~~Port Angeles~~ in Jackson County. I know that many people are facing a choice between heating and eating: they cannot afford to pay for the basic necessities to care for themselves and their families.

You commissioners are in a position to do something about this. I ask you to heed the demands of those who have signed these petitions and bar power companies from plunging the poorest and most vulnerable into the cold and dark.

Thank you.

*To whom would you like me to present
these petitions?*

ULM 1650

PETITION TO PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

We, the undersigned residents of Oregon, hereby petition the **Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC)** to repeal the authorization of the 14.5% rate increase to residential customers, the 17% and 17.5% increases to industrial and large commercial customers of Pacific Power respectively, granted in December, 2010.

We further call upon the PUC to enact a "Winter Moratorium" from November 1st through March 31st as an ongoing policy prohibiting electricity & natural gas shutoffs or disconnections for failure to pay delinquent bills.

At a time of record high unemployment, escalating food, fuel and medical costs, Pacific Power ratepayers – especially those who are least able to meet their basic survival needs – are all too often being forced to go without basic necessities just to avoid utility shutoffs. Presently there exist few avenues of recourse for the majority of Oregon residents who are unable to pay the high utility rates demanded by Pacific Power who has increase electricity rate a full 24% since 2010. Federal energy assistance programs have proven inadequate to meet the entire need that exists for low-income Oregon residents.

We call on the Public Utility Commission to take up its duty to ensure that the utilities they regulate offer safe and reliable energy at reasonable rates, by repealing the 14.5 % rate increase granted in December 2010, enact a moratorium on consideration of further rate increases and implementing a Winter Moratorium on shutoffs for any individual or household whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. In the addition, the Winter Moratorium will include a provision that customers whose service is terminated prior to or after the Winter Moratorium period would be granted a waiver of any and all reconnection fees for those ratepayers whose incomes fall at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

PETITION TO PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

We, the undersigned residents of Oregon, hereby petition the **Oregon Public Utility Commission** (OPUC) to repeal the Commission's authorization of the 14.5% rate increase to residential customers, and the 17% and 17.5% increases to small- and medium-sized local business and commercial customers of Pacific Power, granted in December, 2010.

We call upon the OPUC to direct Pacific Power to enact a year-round Moratorium prohibiting electric service disconnections for failure to pay overdue bills as an ongoing policy for any individual or household whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. In addition, customers whose service is terminated prior to the Moratorium be granted a waiver of any and all reconnection fees for those ratepayers whose incomes fall at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

We further call upon the OPUC to direct Pacific Power to make reasonable accommodations for payment plans with customers whose incomes are above 200% of the federal poverty line but whose financial condition, such as a job loss or foreclosure, leaves them unable to pay their utility bill in full and on time.

At a time of record-high unemployment and escalating food, fuel and medical costs, thousands of Pacific Power ratepayers are being forced to go without basic necessities just to avoid utility shutoffs. There exist few avenues of recourse for the majority of Oregon residents who are unable to pay the high utility rates demanded by Pacific Power. Federal energy assistance programs are inadequate to meet the entire need that exists for low-income Oregon residents.

We demand OPUC uphold its original mission to make use of ... powers of the office ... to protect such customers... from unjust and unreasonable extractions....to obtain ... service at fair and reasonable rates.

UM 1650

**PETITION DEMANDING WINTER MORATORIUM
TO PREVENT UTILITY SHUTOFFS FOR LOW-INCOME ASHLAND RESIDENTS.**

We, the undersigned residents of the City of Ashland, hereby petition the **Ashland City Council** to amend Ashland Municipal Code 14.02.100 to establish and implement a permanent "Winter Moratorium" from November 1st through March 31st on ALL utility (electricity) shutoffs, based on a residential ratepayer's inability to pay.

At a time when the cost of living, including the costs of electricity have been escalating, ratepayers, especially those who are least able to meet their basic survival needs, are many times being forced to go without food, medical care, heat or electricity just to avoid eviction or utility shut offs Presently little recourse exists for Ashland residents who cannot afford out-of-reach utility costs. During the winter, the Ashland Utility Department offers low-income, elderly and disabled households no alternative to utility shutoffs if they are unable to pay their bill in full. City and state energy assistance programs have proven inadequate to meet the totality of need that exists for low-income and disabled residents,

We call on the **Ashland City Council** to take up its duty to make City Ordinances that benefit the economic and physical health of working people in the City of Ashland. The Winter Moratorium will prohibit the City of Ashland Utility Department from terminating, disconnecting or shutting off the electricity of any individual or household whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. In addition, the Winter Moratorium will include a provision that customers terminated prior to or after the Winter Moratorium period would be granted a waiver of any and all reconnection fees for those ratepayers whose income fall at or below 200% of federal the poverty level.

PETITION TO PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

We, the undersigned residents of Oregon, hereby petition the **Oregon Public Utility Commission** (OPUC) to repeal the Commission's authorization of the 14.5% rate increase to residential customers, and the 17% and 17.5% increases to small- and medium-sized local business and commercial customers of Pacific Power, granted in December, 2010.

We call upon the OPUC to direct Pacific Power to enact a year-round Moratorium prohibiting electric service disconnections for failure to pay overdue bills as an ongoing policy for any individual or household whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. In addition, customers whose service is terminated prior to the Moratorium be granted a waiver of any and all reconnection fees for those ratepayers whose incomes fall at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

We further call upon the OPUC to direct Pacific Power to make reasonable accommodations for payment plans with customers whose incomes are above 200% of the federal poverty line but whose financial condition, such as a job loss or foreclosure, leaves them unable to pay their utility bill in full and on time.

At a time of record-high unemployment and escalating food, fuel and medical costs, thousands of Pacific Power ratepayers are being forced to go without basic necessities just to avoid utility shutoffs. There exist few avenues of recourse for the majority of Oregon residents who are unable to pay the high utility rates demanded by Pacific Power. Federal energy assistance programs are inadequate to meet the entire need that exists for low-income Oregon residents.

We demand OPUC uphold its original mission to make use of ... powers of the office ... to protect such customers... from unjust and unreasonable extractions....to obtain ... service at fair and reasonable rates.

GROUNDS FOR DEMANDS TO STOP PACIFIC POWER'S RATE HIKES

- Prior to 2001, Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 756.040 read:

... the commission shall make use of the jurisdiction and powers of the office to protect such customers, and the public generally, from unjust and unreasonable extractions and practices and to obtain for them adequate service at fair and reasonable rates.

In 2001 the state legislature added to the definition of the role of the OPUC as follows:

The commission shall balance the interests of the utility investor and the consumer in establishing fair and reasonable rates. Rates are fair and reasonable for the purpose of this subsection if the rates provide adequate revenue both for operating expenses of the public utility or telecommunications utility and for capital costs of the utility, with a return to the equity holder that is:

a) Commensurate with the return on investments in other enterprises having corresponding risks; and

b) Sufficient to ensure confidence in the financial integrity of the utility, allowing the utility to maintain its credit and attract capital.

This modification of the ORS effectively takes the "public" out of the Public Utility Commission in relation to its legal mandate to protect consumers from "unjust and unreasonable rates."

returned by 5/10/13 to Jackson Comm. to Fuel Committee

PETITION DEMANDING WINTER MORATORIUM TO PREVENT UTILITY SHUTOFFS FOR LOW-INCOME OREGONIANS

We, the undersigned residents of the State of Oregon, hereby petition the **Oregon Public Utility Commission** to establish and implement a permanent "Winter Moratorium" from November 1st through March 31st on ALL utility (natural gas and electricity) shutoffs, based on a residential ratepayer's inability to pay and to write new rules immediately per Oregon Revised Statute 757.755 (1) to this effect. (*see back*)

At a time when the costs of natural gas and electricity have been escalating, ratepayers, especially those who are least able to meet their basic survival needs, are being forced to go without food, medical care, heat or electricity. Presently little recourse exists for Oregonians who cannot afford out-of-reach utility costs. Low-income households are being denied any alternative to utility shutoffs by utility companies and government regulatory agencies alike.

We call on the **Public Utility Commission** to take up its duty to make rules that benefit the economic and physical health of working people in the state of Oregon by **prohibiting shutoffs for any individual or household whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, as criteria per ORS 757.755 (2).** We also call on the PUC to amend ORS 757.760 such that the rules include a provision that any customer terminated prior to, or after, Winter Moratorium due to economic inability to pay, would be granted a waiver of any reconnect fees for those ratepayers at or below 200% of the poverty line.