

April 16, 2024 Good Evening, My name is Jeremy Osterholm. I am the 2024 Board President for the Home Building Association of Greater Portland. I am also the owner and President of Ostercraft Homes Inc. Where I am a second-generation homebuilder in the metro area. I come before you today in support of the NW Natural Gas Line Extension Agreement proposal. The Home Building Association of Greater Portland also known as the HBA is dedicated to maximizing housing choice for all who reside in our region. Our members are industry professionals across the Portland Metro Region in 6 counties, 40 cities, and many more service and utility districts. Our members have been heavily involved and working with Governor Kotek, this last year, on housing growth and housing affordability initiatives that she has successfully proposed. The recent trend of reducing the Line Extension Agreement (LEA) with the end goal of eliminating it plays against affordable housing. For years the LEA has provided our members and communities around the region with a viable option to have multiple energy sources in homes. Without the LEA builders will continue to provide Natural gas to homes but the consumer will ultimately pay more for this product increasing the cost of housing. However, the current proposal presented by NW Natural provides an incentive to not only provide natural gas as an option it incentivizes builders to use more energy efficient equipment in the homes they build. This is a win for housing affordability and for the environment. As a second-generation home builder, my family has been building homes in the Oregon since 1974. I can proudly say in our 50 years of building we have been installing natural gas to our homes. It has been an amenity and an asset for our home buyers. As a small company we work daily to try and find a way to lower the cost of our homes so that we can compete in today's market. We are also always trying to anticipate what the next generation of consumer is going to want in their homes. In light of massive power outages, the last few winters our consumers are making sure that we are able to provide Natural gas as well as power so that they can have options when they are out of power during these winter storm events. They are also asking for energy efficient products. The new LEA proposal from NW Natural will make it easier for me to provide my customers with energy efficient products and help keep my costs in check. I have read through NW Natural's proposal and I am not only in support of it, I am thankful that they have answered the call to serving our industries growth, while lowering emissions. I'd ask that you please take my testimony into account and approve this proposal. Thank you for time, Jeremy Osterholm Home Builders Association of Greater Portland, Board President