

## CITIZEN UTILITY BOARD IS AN ENEMY OF GAS UTILITY CUSTOMERS

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Milwaukie Oregon's Mayor and City Manager had the Citizen Utility Board (CUB) and the Green Energy Institute of Lewis and Clark College testify against Natural gas heating and cooking in early January 2024.

Milwaukie Mayor Batey, Councilor Stavenjord, and City Manager Ober are pushing to deny Milwaukie residents the ability to heat their homes with natural gas and/or cook with natural gas. I had testified to City Council back on December 19, 2023, against Milwaukie's resolution to ban natural gas utility service. [The City's gas ban resolution (not yet law, as it is just a resolution) was passed back in December 2022, led by then Mayor Mark Gamba who often speaks of the dangers of an apocalyptic end to civilization as we know it if carbon emissions are not rapidly reduced and eliminated. Gamba is no longer Mayor as he left to become a state representative in January 2023.]

I argued before City Council on December 19th, 2023, that natural gas home heating is a lot less expensive than heating with electricity - even with efficient heat pumps. So, I suspect that Batey and Ober in response to my testimony invited two organizations, the Oregon Citizen Utility Board (CUB) and the Green Energy Institute, to testify at the January 2, 2024, Regular Council Meeting - Milwaukie Council meets regularly on a bi-monthly basis. Both these organizations argued in their testimony for cities to begin banning natural gas utility service - such as for home heating.

Carra Sahler represented the Green Energy Institute while Bob Jenks represented the Citizen Utility Board (CUB). Sahler is pictured above nodding towards Jenks in agreement with his testimony favoring the City's forcing a transition away from natural gas utility service.

There is some hope that the other three City Councilors might stand in the way and prevent the City from banning natural gas utility service. These three councilors each voiced some skepticism about the impact on living costs for residents if natural gas utility service were to be banned or restricted.

So, I will need to respond with testimony to the Council rebutting the testimony provided by Sahler and Jenks. The next opportunity to do so is January 16, 2024.

I believe CUB has become unbalanced and has lost its primary mission which is to represent utility customers against rate hikes. In other words, CUB has become a facade and no longer represents the best interests of both PGE and Northwest Natural utility customers.

The Citizen Utility Board is created back in the year 1984 by a ballot measure passed by Oregonians. Here is the main question that is asked of voters back in 1984:

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**"QUESTION—Should a nonprofit public corporation funded by voluntary contributions be established to represent the interests of utility consumers?"**

(I believe voters believed then, and still do, that CUB's primary goal is to try to keep utility rate increases less than otherwise. But probably voters did not get to the actual Policy law buried deeper in the Ballot Measure's Explanatory statement.) **Here's is CUB's actual Policies enacted:**

**"The people of the State of Oregon hereby find that utility consumers need an effective advocate to assure that public policies affecting the quality and price of utility services reflect their needs and interests, that utility consumers have the right to form an organization which will represent their interests before legislative, administrative and judicial bodies, and that utility consumers need a convenient manner of contributing to the funding of such an organization so that it can **advocate forcefully and vigorously on their behalf concerning all matters of public policy affecting their health, welfare and economic well-being.**"**

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Do you see a problem? CUB has competing goals, and it appears from Bob Jenks' (CUB's) testimony that CUB is choosing to sacrifice minimizing the cost of utilities to its interpretation of other matters of welfare - taking a position that reflects that CUB may very well have been coopted itself by the Green Energy Institute and other environmental interest groups - environmental organizations who seem bent on sacrificing economic wellbeing for what I will call 'environmental purity.'

*What follows now are tables supporting this article critiquing the Oregon Citizen Utility Board (CUB):*

	The Effective Operating Cost of Home Heating	
	at current utility rates- Milwaukie, Or	
	(cents per KWH equivalent)	
Natural Gas Furnace (95 % Efficiency):	4.7	
Electric Furnace (100% Efficiency):	17.3	
Electric Heat Pump (200% Efficiency):	8.6	

Average Annual Rate of Increase for Residential Utility Bill rate	
(years 2012 to 2022, last available data)	
(Oregon Public Utility Commission Utility Statistics Book)	
Northwest Natural (gas):	0.6%
Portland General Electric:	2.4%

	My Jenks/CUB Notes
CUB's Advocacy for Oregon's Clean Energy Regulations:	<i>CUB strongly lobbies for &amp; supports</i>
CUB Assumes Clean Energy regulation will sharply increase Utility gas costs:	<i>Yes</i>
CUB Assumes PGE's Wild Fire Costs are because of Climate Change:	<i>Yes</i>
CUB Assumes Oregon & Milwaukie's Clean Energy Regulations will stop Climate Change:	<i>Yes</i>
CUB Assumes adding new gas utility customers sharply increases gas utility rates:	<i>Yes. (I find this assumption highly questionable)</i>
I Estimate CUB (Paying) Utility Customer total Membership number to be:	<i>relatively small</i>
CUB's Board of Directors (overseeing Cub) are elected by (Paying) Members of CUB:	<i>Yes</i>
MisMatch between CUB's advocacy and utility rate minimization:	<i>I say very possible</i>