



Helping low income Oregonians meet their energy needs.

July 31, 2007

Steven J. Wright
BPA Administrator and Chief Executive Officer
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Dear Mr. Wright:

Mr. Wright, I am Roger Rees, Executive Director for Oregon HEAT, an independent nonprofit committed to help low-income Oregonians prevent disconnection of utility service by providing bill payment assistance to low-income households. The majority of funding for Oregon HEAT comes from donations from individuals and small foundation grants along with grants from PGE and Pacific Power.

I am writing to share with you the impact that the loss of the Residential Exchange credit has had on my organization and the people we serve. The 13% increase that people are now beginning to see on their electric bills means that people who were just getting by will now require help from organizations like Oregon HEAT to pay their bills. If the credit is not restored before winter, we expect the increase in need will force us to either reduce the number of households we can serve or limit the amount given to each household. This, in turn, may force low-income Oregonians to choose between heating their homes and other vital needs – food, medicine, rent, transportation, etc. These are hard decisions for many of the households we serve because they are either elderly, disabled, or have small children

Poverty and hunger are significant issues in Oregon so I am particularly concerned that this issue directly impacts so many Oregonians. As I am sure you are aware, a majority of the homes in Oregon - some 75% - were receiving the Residential Exchange credit on their electric bills. The current loss of benefits, and the level of those benefits when they eventually resume, is a matter of real significance to thousands of Oregon families.

It cannot have been an easy decision to suspend Residential Exchange payments after the decisions by the 9th Circuit Court and I am sure want to see a rapid resolution to this problem as much as I do. I urge you, and the other parties in the region, to create a long-term, stable solution that restores this credit before winter and sustains it at a fair and equitable level in the years that follow.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger W. Rees".

Roger Rees
Executive Director