

To: Senate Rules Committee
From: Janaira Ramirez, Coalition Organizer
Re: Senate Joint Memorial 5

Date: April 3, 2019



Dear Committee Chair Burdick, Vice Chair Baertschiger, and Members of the Committee:

OJTA is a network of base-building, frontline-led organizations across Oregon, who came together to envision and advocate for a just transition to a regenerative economy, centering the voices of the communities who are most impacted by environmental racism, economic exploitation, and climate change.

A just transition ensures that frontline communities are kept safe from the horrendous ecological and health effects of the processes of extraction, enrichment, weapons assembly and waste disposal associated with nuclear weapons. We must also keep our people safe from the present or future threat of nuclear war. The resources needed to construct deadly nuclear weapons have most often been extracted from the lands of Indigenous communities in the United States. These communities suffer from poor health and working conditions in the mines, from mines which remain uncapped after being shut down, as well as from the lingering effects of nuclear radiation and threat to precious natural lands and waterways. The sheer volume of nuclear tests conducted by the United States have caused many in the Marshall Island to live in toxic waste lands and forced Marshallese communities to leave their homeland and migrate to the continental United States. We must recognize the right of these communities to remain in the places they call home, and that outside forces like nuclear testing on the island as if it was a contained lab without real impacts on human beings, have forced many to find refuge elsewhere. From the first point of nuclear fuel extraction, to the disposal of nuclear waste, these practices have serious biological repercussions, are a racial and economic injustice, they go against our commitment to protect human life, and they will present increasing danger and stressors to the world population.

The United States is the only country that has inflicted the harm of nuclear weapons onto another population. This act marked a very dangerous turning point in warfare. We now live, as many did during the Cold War, with the looming threat of nuclear weapons at the hands of our Commander in Chief. It is your duty, as our elected officials to make sure that your constituents, all of those who call Oregon home, live with peace of mind and a sense of safety.

Senate Joint Memorial 5, with the supported amendment, holds Oregon accountable to the checks and balances needed to ensure our people are safe and live healthy lives. Our government exists to protect our way of life, to protect our people, to provide us with a sense of security, to uphold democratic values and ensure humanity can live to see a healthy future. The light conversations of the use of nuclear weapons by the Commander in Chief disgrace the seriousness and irreparable damage nuclear warfare will cause. Committee members, it is your duty as our elected representatives to protect our people. I urge you to support this resolution and the supported amendment.

Janaira Ramirez

Coalition Organizer, Oregon Just Transition Alliance