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Employment Law

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Via Email

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Re: Testimony in Support of Strong Climate Action re SB 1530

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Olsen, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding SB 1530. I am a civil rights attorney, a mother, and a small business owner. I live and vote in NW Portland.

Oregon is renowned for its natural beauty. From its majestic coastline to its lush rainforests, our state is rich with biodiversity; and like generations of Oregonians that came before us, we are uniquely privileged to share this splendor with our friends, families, and neighbors.

But, if we don't enact the measures necessary to prevent climate change, it will all be a thing of the past.

Signs of impending ecological collapse are all around us. As the acidity of our oceans rise, as catastrophic wildfires become the rule rather than the exception, and as temperatures continue to increase year after year with no signs of abating, we can't continue putting these problems off until tomorrow. We must take action today.

Before the Committee is SB 1530 which does not rise to the urgent challenge to swiftly transition Oregon to a climate resilient economy. Bold climate action cannot wait until the next legislative session, Oregonians need you to pass a strong, effective climate bill in the 2020 session.

I want to thank the Committee for the diligent work toward addressing our climate emergency and urge you all to continue this important work with renewed vigor. It's imperative that a climate emergency is declared, that rigorous guidelines are implemented for emissions, and that communities particularly vulnerable to climate change are given a voice and provided with the financial support to adapt.

A strong climate bill should not pay polluters to maintain the status quo and continue polluting; it should include all relevant industries; it should account for the entire life cycle of emissions; and it should invest in those communities most impacted by climate change.

Climate change is a shared responsibility and front-line communities and communities of color should not continue to disproportionately bear the negative impacts of climate change. As we transition our economy, it is imperative that there be a just transition for workers; we must recognize that economic security of Oregonians is linked with our ability to create and maintain a healthy environment.

Finally, any policy action must be supported with strong enforcement mechanisms. No law will be effective unless those that violate the law are able to be held accountable.

We have a responsibility to our fellow Oregonians, past, present, and future, to not only combat the factors fueling this crisis, but to also practice the responsible stewardship of the land we're fortunate to call home. I am hopeful that you can meet this challenge.

Sincerely,
Christina Stephenson