

March 17, 201

Chair Beyer, Vice Chair Findley, and members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SCR 17: An Environmental Justice Framework for Oregon. For the record, my name is Shaili Rajput. I am a pediatrician advocate and public health expert practicing in Portland, Oregon. I am committed to improving the health and well-being of children and in this pursuit, I urge you to support SCR 17.

It is imperative that our State Legislature address the devastating consequences of environmental and climate injustice in a timely fashion. A first step is agreeing to a statement of principles that set the bar for future action. The proposed resolution follows a valuable tradition of passing resolutions at times we must take first steps to right wrongs, i.e., the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

Children, in addition to BIPOC communities, low-income people, and essential workers, are particularly vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by environmental risks, including air pollution and contaminated water, toxic hazards, and poor sanitation and hygiene. In Oregon, this inequality is a direct byproduct of exclusion from and unequal access to decision-making processes.

The wildfires of September 2020 shed light on this issue: young, developing lungs are susceptible to both the development of and exacerbation of existing chronic lung diseases such as asthma following exposure to pollutants, and my pediatric colleagues practicing in more heavily affected rural areas saw a surge of asthma in their patients, not to mention the trauma that followed displacement and chaos.

Everyone has the right to health and the right to inherit a livable planet. SCR 17 ensures that legislatures protect these rights for all individuals in a just, equitable, and urgent manner. Please support SCR 17.

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