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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. I live in Eugene, OR, and I have been involved with educating Lane County youth on climate since 2011, and on environmental justice since 2017. Our new program, Our Future, empowers high school youth to help address environmental and climate justice issues. I represent our organization in our local NAACP's Environmental Justice Committee, and am dedicated to finding solutions that work for all Oregonians. In addition to my work, I enjoy the natural beauty of Oregon through kayaking, camping, hiking, and trips to our beautiful coastline; I am committed to help preserve these important places. I urge you to support SCR 17.

I acknowledge that our State Legislature needs to do much more to address the urgent issues of environmental and climate justice 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.

This resolution can lead to communities, across Oregon, that are more resilient now and in the future. We need a shared commitment to future policy to address the needs of our frontline communities who are Black, Native American, Indigenous and People of Color communities, essential workers, youth, low-income people and those who are most vulnerable in rural and urban communities.

Oregon needs this resolution, as it recognizes that the lack of services and disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards faced by many communities in Oregon is a product of exclusion from and unequal access to decision-making processes. This resolution would help align the equity goals throughout the legislative and administrative branches of government, to build a just, equitable, and resilient future for all Oregonians.

SCR 17 shows current and future generations that our state is serious about environmental and climate justice, in ways that are aligned with global agreements on human rights.

I urge you to vote yes on SCR 17. As Oregon takes on the monumental challenge of redressing these impacts, there should be a clear indication from the Legislature that the needs of historically and disproportionately impacted communities will be centered every step of the way. We must improve the public health and well-being of all communities while directly tackling the climate crisis and environmental injustice.

Sincerely,

Joshua Frankel
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