

Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, Rayfield and members of the Committee —

Already we are entering into wildfire season in mid-April. We still battle coronavirus, and the massive fires and extremely harmful smoke-filled air from last fall all underscore the crises we will continue to face in our state throughout 2021 and in the coming years.

You have a challenge ahead to balance our budget. But, we also need to plan for and execute strong policy on health, fire protections, affordable energy, and the transition to cheaper, renewable energies that will lessen these current climate-related problems while simultaneously creating economic development in our state.

We cannot do these jobs without fully funding those who do that work — our health and environmental, natural resource, and energy agencies. There are several outstanding bills still in committee this session to lower utility rates for low income Oregonians, to provide for energy efficiency, weatherization and major repairs for rural households and cash poor homeowners and renters. HB 2021 will ensure developers the markets they will rely on to build the floating offshore power generation facilities that will reignite Oregon coastal economies. But all those bills rely on state agencies.

So we are counting on your support to make these things a reality. Please fully fund these agencies with high priority budget items for the Oregon Climate Action Plan so we can get moving:

Dept. of Environmental Quality
Dept. of Forestry
Dept. of Land Conservation and Development
Dept. of Energy
Dept. of Transportation
Building Codes Division
Public Utility Commission
Oregon Health Authority
Dept. of Agriculture
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Brett Baylor