

Greetings, my name is Louise Merkens; I live in Lake Oswego and I attend the Bridge City Friends Meeting in Portland. As a Quaker I believe in peace, justice, community, and an earth restored. I am excited to be working with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon as they promote bills that will help my children and all children to have a future. I feel that it is a moral imperative to respond to the climate crisis in a way that supports all communities. Unfortunately, climate change adversely affects some communities much more than others.

I have been caring about our earth for a long time and I remember the First Earth Day 51 years ago. I spent the following summer of 1971 doing graduate research on the effects of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) on fish. Although later my research interests took me into the field of metabolism, I have always had concern for the health of our earth. The impact of the climate crisis, however, really hit me last September, when our home was on the edge of one of the fire evacuation zones. So my husband and I packed up our car and waited. If we were told to evacuate, however, there was no place safe to go because of COVID-19. Fortunately, we did not have to leave our home. From that experience, I find it hard to imagine what must have been like for the hundreds of families who had to evacuate with no safe place to go, not to mention the many whose homes burned to the ground. The effect of global warming feels very real.

The bill, 100% Clean Energy for All (HB2021), has clear targets for reducing emissions from Oregon's electrical grid at the same time strengthening communities that would be negatively impacted by these changes. I am a firm believer that my well-being is greatest when everyone in our communities have their basic needs met. In addition, I want to be able to face my grandchildren. Ten years from now when they ask "what did I do to fight climate change?" I want to be able to say that although global warming seems to be an overwhelming problem, I worked to convince my legislators to change some of the laws that made a difference.

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