

Testimony in support of SMJ5 – February 25, 2021, 1PM
OR Senate Energy and Environment Committee

Dear Senators;

My name is K.B. Mercer and I live in Portland. I am testifying today on behalf of the Steering Committee as well as the 260 members of the Metro Climate Action Team, which is sponsored by the Oregon League of Conservation Voters.

The Metro Climate Action Team is a community of experienced volunteers working within OLCV to steward significant greenhouse gas reduction policy into law in Oregon. MCATs participate in the Oregon Climate Action Plan coalition and partner with others on coordinated action, particularly in regard to the Governor's Executive Order 20-04 on greenhouse gas reductions. We actively organize to elect and support legislators who will work for strong climate legislation.

Metro Climate Action Team: Info.olcv.mcat@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.olcv.org/metro-climate-action-team/>

I am also a dedicated volunteer with the Citizen's Climate Lobby, and have been lobbying on the federal level for carbon fee and dividend for seven years now.

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763) is a market based, revenue-neutral, bi-partisan solution to the sticky problem of pricing carbon, and is geared to reduce emissions to 90% of 2016 levels by 2050. (energyinnovationact.org)

This bill will be effective at getting our green house gasses under control, and hitting our climate targets. It is both good for people, and good for the economy.

The fee and dividend structure works for people's pocketbooks by making sure that lower income families are made whole as the true cost of carbon finally permeates all layers of our economy. It is revenue neutral, so this bill will not put a new tax on working families. (Actually the bottom 60% of earners will get back more than they spend when the fee is implemented.) This is an innate social justice element built into the fee and dividend structure, and insures that those hit hardest by climate change are protected.

This bill works for businesses by leveling the playing field, spurring innovation, and will create millions of new clean energy jobs.

In the current polarized political atmosphere, we have learned that using heavy regulatory authority is not going to be a successful way to gain cooperation towards the climate goals we must all work towards together. A regulation-heavy approach is not a bi-partisan solution, and if implemented, is vulnerable to being overturned by the next administration. We cannot fight climate change successfully and give businesses the stability they need to build, plan and invest if our legislation and governance is on an endless partisan seesaw.

HR 763 offers an elegant solution. It allows businesses to choose the way they will achieve the drawdown of their carbon pollution, while still remaining responsible to achieve significant and measurable reductions. It keeps the business owners, who know their businesses best, in the driver's seat of how they will accomplish this. It harnesses the mighty power of America's free-market by spurring innovation and creating jobs and works alongside robust capitalism, rather than chafing against it with overregulation. Once market forces are incentivized to plant thousands of economic seeds driving a new energy mix into a sustainable future, it will create new jobs, new businesses and build a stronger, more rooted, green economy that partisan politics cannot derail.

Citizen's Climate Lobby supports SJM 5.
MCATs support SJM 5.
I support SJM 5.
Please add your important voices in support as well.

Thank you!

KB Mercer
10811 SE Schiller St.
Portland, OR 97266
kb@travelinglantern.com

Steering Committee, Metro Climate Action Team
Volunteer, Citizen's Climate Lobby
Climate Reality Leader
Master Recycler
Agent of Change
Small Business Owner (Children's Theatre)