



Testimony in Support of House Bill 4058

House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources- 2022 Regular Session

February 2, 2022

Sara Crowell on behalf of Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Hudson and Smith, and members of the Committee:

My name is Sara Crowell, a legislative fellow and Master's of Public Health student at the OHSU/PSU School of Public Health, submitting testimony for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. ONA is a professional association and labor union that represents more than 15,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers throughout the state. ONA is committed to advocating for initiatives that support quality of care and healthier communities on behalf of nurses, patients, and their families. In alignment with this mission, Oregon Nurses Association submits our support for HB 4058, which would legislate vital assistance for Oregonians most at risk for heat and cold-related illness, injury, and death through the creation of the Healthy Homes Program and Heat Pump Deployment Program.

Oregon has seen the devastating effects of climate change through the increased incidence of wildfires, flooding, and drought over the past several years.² These natural disasters continue to pose an extensive threat to the health, safety and well-being of individuals and communities in our state. Marginalized and vulnerable populations, such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; the young and old; rural, Tribal, and low-income communities; and those with disabilities and/or pre-existing conditions are particularly at risk of experiencing the negative health effects of climate extremes.¹ HB 4058 would provide life-saving cooling and heating technology and help protect Oregonians most at risk through financial assistance for air conditioners, air purifiers, and the installation of heat pumps and related upgrades.

The frequency and magnitude of days with a temperature over 90°F is increasing across Oregon, a trend that is projected to continue.¹ In the Summer of 2021, Oregon experienced one of the worst heat waves in the state's recorded history, which took the lives of over 90 Oregonians in 28 cities across the state.³ The need for these programs is significant and urgent to help protect our families and communities. ONA urges your support of HB 4058 in order to do so.

References:

1. Dalton, M., and E. Fleishman, editors. 2021. Fifth Oregon Climate Assessment. Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon. <https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/occri/oregon-climate-assessments/>.
2. O'Brien, J. (2015, September 26). Extreme Weather Events in a Changing Climate. Oregon Forests and Climate Change. https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/orforestsc/2015/08/21/climate_change_extremes/
3. Samayoa, M. T. A. |. (2021, August 10). Oregon medical examiner releases names of June heat wave victims. Opb. <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/08/06/oregon-june-heat-wave-deaths-names-revealed-medical-examiner/>