

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2601. I am a physician, retired from a career in working in a community health center with underserved populations. I am a member of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility where I focus on the intersection of health, climate and environmental justice.

I strongly support HB 2601: The Treasury Investment and Climate Protection Act. We must stop funding the fossil fuel industry. As more than editors of more than 200 medical journals said last fall, climate change is the single greatest threat to public health. Oregon is a leader in transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Renewable energy infrastructure, i.e., wind and solar, are cheaper than new fossil fuel infrastructure. Investing in the fossil fuel industry is, in fact, risky and not a “smart” way to invest public money.

I was appalled to learn that PERS is the 12th largest US public pension fund and that much of its money is invested in private equity firms that are a significant source of funds for the fossil fuel industry.

States like New York, universities, including Harvard, have chosen to divest from fossil fuels. We must join these and other leaders in doing what is best for PERS recipients, best for Oregon, for our country, for the planet, and for generations to come.

Please join PERS recipients and 98 statewide organizations including racial justice groups, faith communities, adult and youth climate activists who make up the Divest Oregon coalition and pass HB 2601.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

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