

Submitter: Matea LaFrenz  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB854

Hello Committee members, and thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on Senate Bill 854. My name is Matea LaFrenz and my pronouns are she/her. I am a sophomore at Caldera High School in the Bend Lapine school district. I am a student intern at an Oregon leadership Network called Our Future, a partner for sustainable schools. I am also an active member of my green team club at my school and a member of the National Honor Society.

I want to share with you a little bit about my climate story. I have lived in Central Oregon for all 16 years of my life. Over those 16 years, I have seen a place known for its immense beauty of natural spaces (mountains, forests, lakes, and more) being altered by climate change. Not only have I seen an increase in large wildfires in Central Oregon, a trend that will continue, but additionally, increased temperatures boosting tree disease outbreaks and bark beetle invasions, and much more. If we look to the future, there seems to be a trend of worsening climate conditions. Through my 11 years of being in the public school systems, there has been very little curriculum oriented to the issues happening in Central Oregon or globally. It gives the impression that collectively, lawmakers don't prioritize our futures. Which is a distressing reality to live in.

Oregon students need to understand why climate change is happening, and that's why I'm really happy a bill like SB 854 is being introduced. Students hear about the issues, but don't understand why climate change is happening, how it's affecting people, and predicted to affect people. School for me has always been defined as something to help children learn and grow into productive adults, but how are we supposed to become productive adults if we don't even understand the detrimental consequences to our environment happening around us? I also define school as a place giving students the skills to get a job. So the more professional knowledge about climate change young Oregonians have, the more innovative, they will be, and the more resilient, the state, and the communities that make up the state will be.

As lawmakers, you have immense power to bring about positive transformation and to influence your colleagues into doing what is in the interest of the public. Please, see the potential in this bill. Try to see the many other possibilities. It helps put it in place. Teachers are not being asked to shift a new curriculum, but simply to make connections within what they are already doing. This bill is feasible. This is appropriate. I urge you to think about seven generations to the future and the legacy you are leaving behind with your movement on this bill. Thank you.

Kind regards,  
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