

Submitter: Theodora Tsongas

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General  
Government, and Veterans

Measure: HB2601

Greetings Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Tran, and Members of the  
Committee:

I am Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist specializing in environmental epidemiology, retired from the Oregon Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority. I am a member of the Healthy Climate Action Team of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, as well as the Climate and Health Committee of the American Public Health Association.

As a health scientist, I feel it is my duty to live ethically based on my understanding of scientific evidence. As a result, I have tried, to the best of my ability, to divest all my savings and investments from fossil fuels. But, as a retired member of PERS I am disheartened and disappointed that I am forced to live on the profits of an industry that is willfully responsible for catastrophic climate disruption.

A few years ago, I participated in a meeting with Treasurer Read on behalf of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, in which we protested Oregon's investments in coal. We described what we know of the myriad adverse effects on health and life of coal extraction and use as a fuel. Even though Treasurer Read seemed sympathetic to our concerns, nothing changed.

And now, years later, we are still in the same place, being forced to live on the profits derived from fossil fuel extraction and use, what we know as scientists and public health practitioners is a deadly industry with deadly impacts on our life and health and that of generations to come.

It is unconscionable that our State Treasury is not listening, so it must be forced through this legislation, to do so. Please do everything you can to pass HB2601.

Thank you for your very hard work on our behalf.