

Submitter: Naomi Hemstreet

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB3016

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Levy and Levy, members of the committee,

My name is Naomi Hemstreet. I am 16 years old, and I am a climate justice activist with Sunrise PDX. I attend high school in Portland.

I support HB 3016 because it will invest in green infrastructure projects that help the health of our climate and communities.

In the summer of 2021, Oregon faced extreme heat, which was caused by climate change. A week after Portland reached record-breaking temperatures of 115 degrees, I was walking around my neighborhood. I noticed many trees that had brown, crispy leaves on them. They rustled gently in the breeze as I walked. It felt like fall, except it was July, and there was nothing natural about dead leaves in summer. I witnessed our tree canopy, a vital resource, being threatened and ultimately destroyed in places. And this wasn't just in my neighborhood, it was across the rest of Oregon as well.

Green infrastructure projects increase our state's resilience through planting tree canopy, and protecting parks and other natural areas that are currently being threatened by drought, extreme storms, and worsening wildfires.

These projects benefit our climate through sequestering carbon. Trees are vital tools in reducing carbon in the atmosphere, which slows the effects of the global climate crisis. They also remove pollutants that can negatively affect organisms from ecosystems and provide necessary habitat for wildlife.

These projects also benefit our communities through providing shade and diminishing the effects of heat islands. Trees regulate temperature, which positively impacts the health of Oregonians by reducing the number of people who face heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Trees protect the water we drink by filtering out water-soluble pollutants. They also reduce harmful air pollutants through erosion prevention. Additionally, natural spaces such as parks provide places for people to exercise and boost physical and mental well-being.

Investing in green infrastructure is the right step to take to build a future that is clean, healthy, and sustainable for all Oregonians. It is time to invest in building spaces that will serve people and the Earth for generations to come. I urge you to support HB 3016 to realize this vision for a better Oregon.

Thank you,
Naomi Hemstreet
Portland, HD 45