

Submitter: Katie Lynch
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Katie Lynch, and I am writing both as a parent concerned about the world my child will inherit, and as an educator with nearly 20 years of experience in mentoring the next generation of environmental leaders. I have served on the Oregon Environmental Literacy Program Council and teach several community-engaged courses at the University of Oregon focused on best practices in environmental education.

As you all know, the scale and multi-dimensional impacts of climate change are serious and threaten the stability of the very ecosystems upon which humans depend for our survival. We've clearly seen the impacts here in Oregon - with horrific wildfire seasons causing widespread health issues due to smoke, and economic impacts to both our forestry and tourism industries, not to mention impacts on our mental health as we are confined indoors unable to enjoy the spectacular natural heritage that makes Oregon so special.

It is imperative that our educational systems prepare our children to address the environmental and social harms of climate change. Our children need the awareness, knowledge, skills, and an ethic of care to be able to tackle the daunting challenges they are inheriting. We have a responsibility to them to prepare them for the challenges they will face. In order to develop a holistic understanding of the complex interactions between ecological and social systems, and develop the needed skills (including critical thinking, problem-solving, etc.), our children need carefully scaffolded, age-appropriate opportunities throughout their K-12 education. To be clear, I am not advocating for gloom and doom - that is not age appropriate or best practice. I am advocating for this bill because it provides a logical way forward, that responds to the urgency of now, that focuses on: 1) providing our children with accurate research-driven information, 2) developing their conceptual understandings of climate change and the linkages between environmental and social issues, and 3) inspires creative, critical, problem solving to create a more sustainable and just future for all.

I urge you to support his bill providing Comprehensive Climate Change Education in Oregon schools. It really isn't an understatement to say that it is our moral imperative to act now. Please be the wise, visionary, bold leaders we hoped you would be when we elected you to office.

Thank you,
Katie Lynch