



# The Oregon Conservancy Foundation

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## Before the House Committee on Education

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### Testimony of Cathryn Chudy Oregon Conservancy Foundation March 09, 2023

Chair Dembrow, members of the Committee, and the public, my name is Cathryn Chudy and I am a Board Member of the Oregon Conservancy Foundation (OCF). I am submitting written testimony on behalf of OCF, opposing the bill unless amended.

The Oregon Conservancy Foundation supports the development and implementation of a climate change curriculum for K-12 students in public schools in Oregon. We are greatly concerned, however, about the potential for the content of that curriculum to be subverted by industry driven influence, in particular fossil fuel and nuclear industry advocacy.

These articles illustrate the scope of the problem, which involves not only industry but government funded inputs that can result in misinformation and propaganda built into what should be science-based, factual, independent and free of undue influence.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/90545/nuclear-power-energy-industry-lobby-department-education-school>:

“Industry-funded materials in public schools are nothing new. For decades, corporations have been flooding classrooms with propaganda. In their heyday, nuclear power companies were among the most aggressive; a 1979 survey of corporate-sponsored materials in public schools found that, when it came to targeting kids, utilities—particularly nuclear utilities—went to the greatest lengths. These efforts dwindled in the late ’80s. But they’re making a comeback as the once-moribund nuclear industry gears up for a revival.”

<https://slate.com/human-interest/2021/11/oil-gas-companies-climate-education.html>:

“The phenomenon of fossil fuel companies plying schoolchildren with their messages is decades old...Today, fossil fuel-funded educational programs aimed at children are abundant.”

We are concerned about the language in sections 2(4)(a) and 2(4)(c) and urge you amend the bill by striking the words “and other interested stakeholders” in both sections in order to ensure that the Oregon Department of Education and the K-12 schools it oversees are independent from fossil fuel and nuclear industry propaganda and misinformation:

(4) The Department of Education shall:

(a) In consultation with the Department of Environmental Quality, the Oregon Health Authority [~~and other interested stakeholders~~], develop and adopt a model plan to provide guidance to school districts in establishing a climate change instructional program under this section.

(c) Review and approve activities, resources and materials developed by the Department of Environmental Quality, the Oregon Health Authority [~~and interested stakeholders~~] that meet the academic content standards for the climate change instructional program developed by the Department of Education and make available a list of the approved activities, re- sources and materials to school districts.