

Submitter: Neha Vimal  
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 Neha Vimal. I'm a freshman at Westview High School and have been in the Beaverton School District since I started kindergarten.

I did 5th grade at Springville Elementary, in the Expeditionary Learning program. That year, my class spent months studying the science behind plastic pollution, and participated in the National Geographic GeoChallenge, through which my group was selected to attend the PNW GeoChallenge conference to present our concept to combat plastic pollution. Our class also learned about climate activism, raised hundreds of dollars towards cleaning up beaches, and participated in a student climate rally. I came home everyday with new facts about pollution and new ways for our household to be more eco-friendly. By the end of the year, my family had stocked up on reusable straws and shopping bags and I was convinced that I was going to grow up to be an environmental engineer. While my career aspirations have changed, the awareness and sense of responsibility I gained from that experience has definitely stuck with me.

In the coming years, our generation is the one that will be taking the reigns on society. As the condition of our planet continues to deteriorate, it is crucial that more and more young people go into green engineering and environmental science, and for that to happen, we need to be providing climate education to all students.

A lot of people have this idea that climate change is only a problem for random rare species and people living on remote islands. But this is something that does, or will soon affect each and every one of us. Oregon specifically is projected to lose much of its natural fish populations and is prone to increasing levels of wildfires, drought, and water pollution. Teaching about our realistic carbon footprint and on taking action allows young people to develop lifestyles that are less wasteful and harmful to the environment.

I want all students to get the kind of climate education that I've had, so that in adulthood, they will be equipt to make thoughtful and sustainable choices regarding their consumption, transportation, etc. For these reasons, I ask the committee to soon pass and put into effect SB 854.

Thank you,

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