

Submitter: Darin Henry
On Behalf Of: Oregon Educators for Climate Education
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Dear Senate Committee on Education: Chair Senator Michael Dembrow, Vice-Chair Senator Suzanne Weber, Senator Dick Anderson, Senator Lew Frederick, Senator Sarah Gelsner Blouin, Senator Art Robinson and Senator Rob Wagner.

My name is Darin Henry. I retired from Sheldon High School in Eugene in 2021. I advised the school's environmental club for 14 years. I'm a founding member of Oregon Educators for Climate Education, OECE, that drafted the legislation.

SB 854 does not require the Oregon Department Education, ODE, to prepare its model education plan for Climate Education for three years. School districts as well have three years before they are required to show their plans to the ODE.

I certainly appreciate that Oregon's budget is tight this year. In comparison to other bills, however, SB 854 is inexpensive. And, Oregon stands to save money if its citizens become capable of adapting their communities, businesses and ecosystems to withstand the climatic changes they are, and will be experiencing in the future. SB 854 is an ounce of prevention that will save a pound of unpreparedness, and disaster relief spending.

Even if passed completely unfunded, SB 854 would give teachers permission to teach students, the next generation, how to address climate change now and in the future. It would also insulate superintendents who fully understand the importance of teaching Climate Education, but don't dare allow teachers to teach it fearing they will lose their jobs. Vocal parents who don't believe climate change is real are ready to come down on school boards to fire superintendents who would allow it. As a consequence, students are like deer in headlights not understanding that the bright lights and loud noise coming around the corner is Climate Change. No one is teaching them to get off the road.

The ODE and school districts have three years before being required to prepare their climate education plans. This is ample time to secure funding especially in light of the passages of House Bill 2021 requiring Oregon to reduce its carbon emissions. The possibilities for reducing carbon emissions is greatly amplified when citizens understand how cutting carbon emissions applies to them and the everyday life choices they make.

SB 854 is a preemptive, modest investment that will pay large dividends in the short term by preparing for the threats that climatic changes are, and will present. SB 854

will pay long term dividends from our readiness to take advantage of economic opportunities that changes always present. Put simply, knowledge is power and ignorance is expensive and opportunities lost. Oregon can not afford not to pass SB 854.

Thank you senators, for your service to all that is Oregon. I am asking you to please consider future budgets and voting yes on SB 854.

Sincerely,

Darin Henry
Oregon Educators for Climate Education