



March 16, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for SB 868, 869, 870, and 871

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Emerson Hamlin, and I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a nurses union and professional association representing over 15,000 health care workers and providers, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, home health, and county health departments across Oregon. We are supportive of the Resilient, Efficient Buildings policy package, SB 868 - 871, which will reduce climate pollution, while supporting healthy, affordable, resilient communities and family-wage jobs across Oregon.

Climate change is a serious threat to human health. As stated in Oregon Health Authority's 2020 Climate and Health Report, rapidly accelerating climate change is intensifying public health crises.¹ Severe wildfires increase respiratory illness, heatwaves cause heat strokes so serious that people require hospitalization, and even more routine concerns, like poor air quality, can lead to strokes, heart disease, and lung cancer.² All will result in more Oregonians dying. Of course, those who are at the most risk for experiencing these health consequences are our community members who are already vulnerable, including houseless folks, people without access to effective heating or cooling, and workers who labor outside.

Our nurses believe that everyone deserves to live long, healthy, meaningful lives. To create that reality, we must do more to reduce the harm of climate change, and its resulting health impacts. The Resilient, Efficient building package is a meaningful part of the solution: by providing homes and buildings that offer meaningful defense against climate harms, and improving buildings to reduce pollution and future climate impacts, we will be supporting healthier people and a healthier planet. ONA urges a yes vote. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin

¹ York EA, Braun MJF, Goldfarb GG, Sifuentes JE. Climate and health in Oregon: 2020 report. Oregon Health Authority. December 2020: Portland, OR

² Environmental Protection Agency. (2022, November 11). *Understanding the Connections Between Climate Change and Human Health*. EPA. Retrieved March 17, 2023