

Submitter: Estelle Voeller

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB2990

Re: HB2990 - Support

Chair Marsh and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment:

I live in rural Jackson County, outside the City of Phoenix, with a residence address of Medford. My family, including individuals with disabilities, had to evacuate through walls of fire on both sides of the roadway during the Almeda Fire in 2020. We were lucky and found our home and outbuildings intact afterwards, although it took days to restore electricity, phone and internet service. A number of friends lost homes, all their belongings and their small businesses. Some still remain in temporary dwellings, living in vans and mobile homes, or constantly moving for house-sitting/pet-sitting gigs, some awaiting approvals before rebuilding. Searching for information, resources, food, housing, bedding, water, and dealing with the psychological trauma were overwhelming for many.

It was clear that emergency management services were stretched thin and inadequate. Volunteer groups and individuals did an admirable job in stepping in to meet neighbors and strangers' immediate needs as best we could. But many people fell through the cracks and some are still struggling.

I am in wholehearted support of this bill to provide grants to proactively create Resiliency Hubs and networks so communities throughout Oregon will be more prepared when future disasters strike. Our inability as a state, nation, world to effectively address global warming and the resulting climate chaos means there will be more frequent and extreme disasters up ahead, whether they be from excessive heat or freezing cold, drought or flooding, wildfires and smoke, intense winds. Vulnerable residents - especially low-income, housing-challenged, disabled and elderly - need safe places to go and basic life-saving services. The creation of Resiliency Hubs now before the next disaster strikes is a prudent and essential step in saving lives and building the support structures and personnel capacities to assist those who experience adverse events. Having Resiliency Hubs in place before the Cascadia Subduction megathrust earthquake happens would also strengthen emergency planning, response and recovery to that anticipated, but unpredictable event.

Thank you for your far-sighted thinking in developing this legislation, as well as your trust in the efforts of civic organizations, leaders and volunteers who generously

respond to the needs of their neighbors and communities.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2990.

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