



Office of Commissioner Gonzalez

March 21, 2023

House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Submitted via ORLIS

Re: Support for HB 2990 Community Resilience Hubs

Dear Chair Marsh, Co-Chairs Levy and Levy, and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment:

As the Portland City Commissioner in charge of Public Safety, I am responsible for the largest group of emergency volunteers in any American city to date. More than 2,200 trained Neighborhood Emergency Team members regularly support local emergency response by staffing warming shelters, standing by down power lines, distributing sandbags, and clearing storm drains to prevent street flooding. Portland's Neighborhood Emergency Teams have also deployed across the state, providing mutual aid for wildfire shelters in Clackamas County and water distribution in Marion County. I know first-hand that community volunteers create surge capacity for emergency response in a way that is efficient, and culturally responsive to the communities they serve.

I am pleased to support HB 2990, which creates a pool of grant funding for community resilience hubs across the state. Investment in facilities that can serve as safe and resilient staging locations for emergency supply distribution, relief services navigation, and community emergency response training has the potential to provide big dividends to communities, and to expand opportunities

for mutual aid, whether community groups are coming to serve fellow Oregonians, or evacuees are seeking a reception center out of harm's way.

As the Commissioner in Charge of Portland Fire and Rescue, Emergency Communications, and Emergency Management, I am also all too familiar with the resource constraints that professional first responders face. I know that extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and other natural hazards stress our emergency response systems. A wise investment in community resilience can increase Oregon's capacity to respond to wildfires, heat waves, floods, and other disasters in a way that is efficient, compassionate, and appropriate to the needs of each community.

Thank you for considering this perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rene Gonzalez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rene Gonzalez

Portland City Commissioner