

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

March 22, 2023

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Levy, and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and the Environment,

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and Oregon Interfaith Power & Light express our strong support for HB 2990, Community Resilience Hubs. Many of our 15 member denominations and other faith communities and faith-based organizations all over the state have participated in the types of community resilience efforts this bill aims toward, and we welcome the extra support and network of community-based organizations, state agencies, and individuals who could more effectively collaborate using the funds this bill will provide.

Faith communities have long been involved in disaster response and recovery, and in the past this has often meant sending teams to other places. With more frequent extreme weather events and wildfires in all parts of the globe, many are turning toward participation in building more local resilient communities and neighborhood disaster responses.

When the wildfires happened in 2020, EMO helped generate and publicize a list of faith communities able to host those displaced by the fires. Many of our member congregations have served as warming and cooling shelters. We are sponsoring an Interfaith Solar Campaign so congregations can get solar panels with back-up batteries in order to have power during emergencies and contribute toward the renewable energy transition. We have hosted Oregon Interfaith Earth Summits for the last two years with a focus on climate resilience and disaster preparedness and response. In other words, we have been training and preparing faith communities to participate in community resilience projects.

Many of our congregations have spaces that could be used as community resilience hubs and are excited about participating in resilience networks with community partners. The funding from HB 2990 will help local networks build more resilient communities every day, and be more prepared to respond in the event of disaster. While people of faith have jumped in and done what we can when disaster strikes, we are excited about the possibilities this bill will afford of working with our communities to better prepare in advance. We applaud Oregon for taking action to mitigate and reverse climate impacts, and part of that work is strengthening our communities to care for their neighbors.

Sincerely,

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