

April 20, 2023

Co-Chair Lew Frederick

Co-Chair Susan McLain

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301



RE: Testimony for HB 5205

My name is Sequoia Ahimsa, I am Education & Training Program Coordinator for Lomakatsi Restoration Project and a long-term resident of southern Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to support Oregon Conservation Corps.

Throughout my career I have had the honor and privilege to serve hundreds of youth through nationally recognized programs funded by federal, state, philanthropic, and private dollars. I am a first-hand witness to the positive impact that this program has had in my community, not only healing lands and protecting homes in the wildland urban interface from devastating wildfire, but how it is giving our youth hope for a brighter future.

Through funding provided by Oregon Conservation Corps we have the ability to bolster a highly comprehensive program that sets the stage for fundamental career paths necessary to fight the ever growing threat to catastrophic wildfire, and create living wage jobs for underserved communities in our state.

I ask that you consider the continuation of this program for the sustainability of ecosystems, communities, and our local economies. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to be able to serve under the Oregon Conversation Corps. Because of this program I know in my heart that myself and so many others are making a difference.

We respectfully urge the Committee to fully fund the HECC's Policy Option Package 301 which includes \$10 million for the Oregon Conservation Corps and \$2 million dedicated to Tribal Youth Corps funding, to build upon the impressive start and momentum of OCC. This is a wise, forward-thinking investment for both forest and community resilience and for the youth of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "SA", written in a cursive style.

Sequoia Ahimsa

Education & Training Program Coordinator

Lomakatsi Restoration Project