

Submitter: Becca Phelps
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Co-chairs Steiner and Sanchez, members of the Committee, for the record my name is Becca Phelps and I live in Three Rivers.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of a strong, strategic, climate-smart 2023-25 biennium budget. I work with rural, low-income, and underinvested in communities in regard to climate and environmental justice and time and time again we hear folks telling us that our state needs to invest in climate priorities NOW! We cannot wait for the next emergency or disaster. My colleagues and I at Unite Oregon talked with over 200 participants through a Climate Justice Listening Tour that we conducted. We heard story after story and idea after idea about ways to prepare for and invest in community resources when it comes to climate adaptation and mitigation. There are a variety of climate and environmental focused bills that would help communities do what they are asking for and need. HB 2990 Resilience hubs and networks will keep communities safe, healthy, and well-connected before, during, and after disasters; for example when fires took over the Warm Springs tribal area and land, community members and organizations were the first to show up and knew how to respond. SB 868-871 would invest in new programs to help achieve Oregon's climate goals and build healthy, resilient communities. The 2023 biennium budget presents a vital opportunity to leverage historic federal funding for Oregon and drive smart investments to improve public health, cut climate pollution, create family-wage jobs, and drive down their community costs for Oregonians across the state.

Specifically, I urge you to prioritize a strategic climate budget that:
Positions Oregon to leverage unprecedented federal funding opportunities to maximize benefits for climate, jobs and justice;
Ensures State agencies are adequately funded and capacitated to implement existing climate programs and policies.

Our state energy and natural resources agencies are a mere 2% of the state budget; this is the last place the legislature should be looking to save pennies.

A modest investment today will help families have safer and cleaner homes, help communities reduce climate pollution, and create local clean energy jobs that can't be exported and will help our state weather any coming recession. As someone who advocates for community members and works to amplify and uplift voices of folks who aren't comfortable or able to always access this system, this message is also on their behalf. One quote from our listening tour sticks out from a rural Central Oregonian: "We need policies that help low-income families help their health and

living conditions as climate change occurs. We need equitable funding for response efforts, equitable resource distribution, and outreach to community members to see what they need.” Also, these bills would support workforce development opportunities and invest in our communities and economy. One community member also shared: "Continue creating new jobs that are climate-centered.”

Invest in our communities and respond to the current climate disasters that are in front of us and that won't stop coming.

Thank you for your time,
Becca Phelps
Three Rivers