

Submitter: Ben Stickney

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General  
Government, and Veterans

Measure: HB4083

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 4083.

I am a lifelong Oregon resident with two young children. I am concerned not only about the economic viability of our State's investments in coal, but how these investments subsidize this outdated and dirty fuel. We want our State at the cutting edge of the energy transition to make our communities safer and more resilient to the effects of climate change.

I strongly support HB 4083 — the COAL Act — because I think it's critically important that we protect the fiscal viability of Oregon's investments. More than 400,000 Oregonians are PERS members. They and their families depend on their pensions. But their pensions are at risk when the Treasury invests in coal, which is not a good investment for the long term. Since California began removing coal from its CalPERS portfolio, it has gained an estimated \$598 million in returns. Oregon, on the other hand, has foregone \$340 million in returns, according to an analysis by Divest Oregon. As the former Deputy Comptroller of New York State said, "Divestment is a defensive tool employed to protect investors from the loss of value – losses as certain as climate change's global reach."

We need the Oregon Treasury to protect PERS and the rest of the Treasury's investments as we transition towards a green economy and I believe this bill is a small step forward. HB 4083 is right-sized for the short session: the provisions of the act are specific, achievable and measurable.

It is time for the Legislature to act NOW to prevent future fiscal losses for hardworking Oregonians and to cut financial ties with the companies putting our communities in danger - in childhood, I had a chronic illness, asthma, from living in close proximity to Portland's NW Industrial Area, I am deeply concerned about the air pollution caused by the transportation and storage of fossil fuels in close proximity to numerous high-density neighborhoods in Portland.

Please vote the COAL Act out of committee. Thank you for your support of HB 4083. Oregon needs to be a leader.

Sincerely,  
Ben S., HD 44