

Submitter: Arica Sears

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3170

January 29, 2025

To: House Committee on Energy and Environment on Climate, Energy, and Environment,

Subject: Support for Resilience Hubs and Networks

Dear Chair Lively, Vice–Chair Gamba, Vice–Chair Bobby Levy, and Members of the House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment:

My name is Arica Sears, and I am a fourth-generation resident of Tierra del Mar, Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3170, which would provide an additional \$10 million in funding for Resilience Hubs and Networks. As someone who has witnessed firsthand the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, I know how vital these resources are for rural communities like mine. Oregon’s small coastal communities are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events, yet we often lack the infrastructure and resources needed to respond effectively. Over the years, we have faced high winds, ice storms, flooding, and wildfires—events that frequently leave us without power, communication, or safe evacuation routes.

In high school, my family experienced over a week without electricity after a severe storm. We relied on camping equipment to prepare food and stay warm. In 2020, during the Labor Day wildfires, our rural community was completely unprepared. Power outages also meant no cell service for those of us who depend on Wi-Fi calling. After that experience, our community invested in DSLR radios and now holds monthly practice calls to improve our emergency preparedness.

Last year’s February ice storm highlighted our vulnerabilities once again. Aging power poles snapped in half, roads were blocked, and the main road connecting us to Pacific City collapsed into the beach, cutting us off from emergency response support. Fortunately, due to prior preparation, we were able to assist neighbors, offer warmth and food with our generator and wood stove, and help reconnect people with family outside the area. One of our elderly neighbors told us that because of the support she received during the storm, she reconsidered leaving the community despite her concerns about aging in a rural area.

This is the reality of living in rural Oregon—when disaster strikes, we cannot count on immediate help. We rely on each other. Resilience Hubs provide the essential

infrastructure and resources needed to ensure our communities can withstand and recover from these emergencies. Investing in Resilience Hubs not only strengthens community response but also supports first responders, many of whom in rural Oregon are volunteers. When communities are better prepared, emergency personnel can focus on those with the greatest needs.

So far, Resilience Hubs and Networks have invested \$10 million in community-driven disaster preparedness, but the demand far exceeds the available funding. During the last grant cycle, over 700 applications were submitted, yet only 96 were funded. This demonstrates a critical need for continued investment.

By supporting HB 3170, we can continue building strong, resilient Oregon communities. Let's ensure that when the next disaster strikes, Oregonians don't just survive—they thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Arica Sears
Tierra del Mar, Oregon