

Office of Sustainability Public Health



February 3, 2025

House Committee On Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

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:

The increasing frequency, duration, and severity of climate-related and other natural disasters, such as a Cascadia earthquake, necessitate additional support for Oregonians to prepare for, respond to, and recover from these events. Emergency preparedness is a top priority for all Oregonians.

Extreme weather in Oregon has continued steadily since the passing of House Bill 3409 in 2023, including the 2024 winter storm, heat wave, and a record breaking fire year. Continued funding of the Resilience Hubs and Networks grant is essential to support community members when they need shelter or resources during a crisis. The impact of these events often exceeds the capacity of state and local emergency management services, as well as the healthcare system, jeopardizing the health and safety of Oregonians. Multnomah County sees the impacts of severe weather events in the communities we serve, especially when temperatures reach extreme highs or lows. Our [Heat Vulnerability Index](#) suggests that the population in East County is more sensitive to extreme heat and has fewer resources to cope with climate hazards of all kinds. Our 2023 Environmental Justice Snapshot documents lower tree canopy, higher energy cost burden, higher concentration of Black, Indigenous, and people of color, and lower life expectancy in this area. The area is densely populated, with approximately 50 multifamily housing communities with more than 1,500 apartments, many of which are affordable units. The median household income in Rockwood is \$40,397, 30% less than the median income for Oregon. These factors make it harder for East County communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

The overwhelming demand for the 2024 Community Resilience Hubs and Networks grant program highlights the critical need for these resources across the state. The Oregon Department of Human Services received over 700 applications totaling \$173 million in requests, yet only \$10 million was available, funding just 96 projects.

While these grants have supported critical infrastructure and staffing, more funds are needed, especially as federal resources for climate change preparedness quickly dwindle. In addition to additional funding, we also propose the following changes made to the bill language:

1. Stronger Equity Language:

- a. Section to Amend: Subsection (3)(d) and potentially throughout the bill.
- b. Proposed Amendment: Include language that mandates equitable allocation of resources, not just a description of the ability to serve these communities. This could include specific targets for funding allocation or requirements for community representation in decision-making processes.
- c. Benefit: This would move the bill beyond simply acknowledging the need for equity to actively promote it, ensuring that the funds are distributed in a way that addresses historical injustices and systemic disparities.

2. Clearer Definitions:

- a. Section to Amend: Subsection (1)(a) and (1)(b)
- b. Proposed Amendment: Provide more specific and measurable definitions for "Resilience Hub" and "Resilience Network". For example, include criteria for what constitutes "supporting community needs" or "enhancing quality of life".
- c. Benefit: This would enhance clarity and consistency in the application and evaluation process, ensuring that the funds are used for their intended purposes and that the outcomes can be effectively measured.

3. Community Oversight and Accountability:

- a. Section to Amend: Section 1 and potentially new sections added.
- b. Proposed Amendment: Establish a community oversight board or advisory committee with representation from diverse communities to guide the implementation and evaluation of the Resilience Hubs and Resilience Networks.
- c. Benefit: This would ensure that the communities most impacted by the bill have a voice in the decision-making process and that the services provided are responsive to their needs and priorities.

4. Sustainability and Long-Term Funding:

- a. Section to Amend: Section 2 and potentially new sections added.
- b. Proposed Amendment: Include provisions for long-term funding and sustainability of the Resilience Hubs and Resilience Networks beyond the initial grant period. This could include exploring diverse funding sources, such as public-private partnerships or dedicated revenue streams.
- c. Benefit: This would ensure that the Resilience Hubs and Resilience Networks can continue to provide essential services to the community over the long term, building true resilience and sustainability.

House Bill 3170 is essential to empower local communities to build resilience strategies and help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. By investing in preparedness, we can save lives, reduce the burden on emergency response and healthcare systems, and ensure access to life-saving, community-driven resources for all Oregonians.

We strongly urge the passage of House Bill 3170.

Sincerely,

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