



# Oregon Synod

*Walking Together Into Courageous Love*

February 4th, 2025

To: House Committee on 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:

I write on behalf of the Disaster & Climate Resilience Team of the Oregon Synod, a body of over 100 ministries of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) throughout the state, in support of HB 3170 to provide an additional \$10 million in funding for Resilience Hubs and Networks.

Our team brings together faith communities (Lutheran and multifaith), neighbors, and community groups to prepare for and respond in the case of disasters, and to build day-to-day resilience in the face of climate change and disruptions, in a way that leaves no one behind. Our work includes accompanying and providing technical support to congregations and community leaders across the state who are developing Resilience Hubs and Networks in their local communities.

Part of our initial impetus for supporting the development of Resilience Hubs & Networks grew out of our team’s experience during the 2020 Labor Day fires, which took the lives of 11 individuals and destroyed thousands of homes and businesses. In fact, one of our team’s founding staff members, John Core (who has since passed away) and his wife (who is a pastor in our Synod), Rev. Christine Core, lost their own home in the Holiday Farm fire.

Our on-the-ground experience in the McKenzie River area in the midst of that disaster – as well as our ongoing recovery and resilience work with congregations, community-based organizations, and LTRGs there and elsewhere – reinforced for us the absolutely critical role that hyper-local hubs and networks can play in supporting resilience before, during and after disasters and extreme weather events. *Especially* when such networks are grounded in authentic, face-to-face, relationships between neighbors who know and trust one other. Indeed, research shows that the single most important predictor of a community’s resilience in the face of disaster is that community’s level of social cohesion.

Our team and members of Oregon Synod congregations in different areas of the state were active in efforts to advocate for the initial Community Resilience Hub & Network grant program. Several of the congregations and groups we are accompanying were among the hundred of



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groups that applied for grants last year and were not funded in that initial round of grants. Meanwhile, these groups (many of them largely powered by volunteers who are highly skilled and dedicated but also have limited capacity) continue to do the deep on-the-ground work of building social, physical and emotional resilience at the local level.

Additional funding would go a long way towards shoring up and strengthening this emerging web of Resilience Hubs & Networks statewide, particularly in rural and lower-income communities, and those with a higher percentage of immigrants and people of color, that are often hit first and worst by climate disruptions and disasters, while simultaneously having the least access to resources to invest in the physical infrastructure and staffing needed for building long-term resilience.

I urge you to support HB 3170 so we can continue building more resilient communities throughout Oregon.

Sincerely,  
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