

Submitter: Catherine Bax

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2949

Date: March 1, 2025

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

Subject: Support HB 2949

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, and members of the House Committee on

Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

My name is Catherine Bax. I am a retired physician assistant.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 2949.

A Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake in the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub would result

in an oil spill akin to the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, immeasurable cultural losses, detrimental

impacts to human health, and massive costs in damages, possibly totaling to billions.

Oregon needs get serious about this threat NOW.

HB 2949 This bill would direct the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to contract a study on financial assurance requirements for bulk and liquid fuel terminals. Financial

assurance would require that a business/service provider – not the consumer or taxpayers – bears financial responsibility for costs arising from a disaster, accident, or provider failure.

I am concerned about the health and safety risks of a disaster in the CEI Hub. Not only to those of us who live near the Hub but to all Oregonians who will be burdened with the results of the of the disaster when it eventually happens. Volatile fuels, additives and gasses will be spewed into the atmosphere, the soil and the river.

Likely the fuels will

ignite and release a toxic plume of air pollutants that are dangerous for those working

at the site and first responders but also to those in surrounding neighborhoods, not

only people but pets, live-stock and wildlife. The air pollutants released include

volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, particulate

matter and sulfur dioxide. They are associated with increased risks of cancer,

asthma, exacerbation of chronic respiratory diseases, and strokes.

The health costs of a CEI Hub disaster will be enormous. In addition, the costs to

cleanup an oil spill as a result of a Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake are projected to be between \$109 million to \$1.4 billion.

In addition, I strongly urge you not to adopt an amendment that would pre-empt action by an entity other than the State that precludes another governmental entity

such as Multnomah County from taking action now.

Oregon needs a "energy storage transition plan" now because of the cost of not doing this will be far greater. Oregon cannot afford the cost of major disasters. And at this point, help from the Federal Government is not something we should count on. Pass HB2949 now and let's get going on this before the disaster happens here. Don't let Oregon fall prey to one of the key tactics of the fossil fuel industry: delay, delay, delay. We need to take action NOW.

Thank you.

Catherine Bax