

House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Re: HB 2949
3/8/25

Greetings Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

I am Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist with a career in epidemiology and public health. I managed the Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance System at the Oregon Health Division before I retired. I live in Multnomah County where we will suffer extremely dire threats to life, health, and infrastructure in the event of a subduction zone earthquake that will set off the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub.

I oppose HB 2949 for the following reasons:

We need a strong measure, whether for study or regulation of financial assurances, but, HB 2949 needs to be much stronger than what has been done along these lines in Washington State for a somewhat different situation. It is insufficient for our protection.

And, I absolutely oppose any attempt to include Preemption! We must do all we can at every level in this state to deal with this threat, and that includes local and county and state working together, each in its own way and synergistically. The state cannot and should not attempt to allow preemption, regardless of pressure from the oil industry that works consistently to delay, delay, delay a response to this threat so that we, the people who live here, are left with the financial burden as well as the loss of everything else. Because of our knowledge and scientifically based predictions on the timing of Cascadia subduction zone earthquakes, we know that an extreme seismic occurrence is due ANY TIME NOW! We have to use every effort from all jurisdictions to address this problem.

Thank you for your time and attention.