

Submitter: Helena Birecki  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3365

Dear Chair Neron and members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 3365. My name is Helena Birecki and I'm a Pilates teacher, the interim Chair of Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter, and a human who has since she was a child recognized that she is only alive because of the supportive ecosystem around her: clean water, clean air, access to sufficient healthy food and more.

I strongly support HB 3365 - which seeks to expand and integrate climate change instruction across all K-12 core subject areas (language arts, sciences, mathematics, social studies, health, physical education and the arts). From my childhood to just a few years ago, climate and environmental impacts were things that were mostly hitting other people in other places. The last few years have hit Oregon, and even the city of Portland hard— with unprecedented fires and resultant widespread air quality issues, heatwaves that not only broke high temperature records but were more deadly due to their duration and a lack of cooling at night, and arctic storms and drought and other unusual climate circumstances that have damaged farmers' crops. The active impacts of climate change are here, and they are going to be an increasingly big challenge moving forward. It only makes sense for K-12 schools to equip students for the world they will have to navigate and work in as adults.

The climate crisis — both in terms of mitigation and adaptation — is going to have to be addressed in all fields, on all fronts. We need art to catch people's attention and help people remember. We need environmental justice to make sure we do not repeat the sins of the past. We need consideration of climate change in physical education to know how to balance the standards of fitness with the climate conditions on a given day.

I have heard that students requested this bill which would expand and integrate climate resilience instruction across all K-12 core subject areas. Please heed the students' call and equip them for their future.

A yes vote on HB3365 would help put Oregon on the path to leadership in becoming the second state to enact comprehensive climate education. I urge you to vote in favor.

Thank you for your leadership,  
Helena Birecki

Portland, OR