

Submitter: Diana Richardson
On Behalf Of: OCERA
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR28

The right to a clean, safe and healthy environment.....such as the one we inherited from the people who cared for this land for thousands of years before the arrival of European settlers--is the bedrock of life. We see what has happened here in this precious land since then: rivers, land and air polluted with radioactive substances which damage the health of residents and the yet to be born every day; the list is too long to write here, but we are all too well aware.

I have been part of the ongoing fight as a grassroots activist to prevent the continuance and furthering of these harms, as have the many tribal communities which live in Oregon, who have been leading these battles. How many times, how many hours of our lives have we spent trying to block polluting coal and oil trains, the building of refineries and now the building of 'small' nuclear reactors, to name only a few such instances? The lack of a Right in our Constitution declaring our inalienable right to this clean, safe, healthy environment is what has meant we must be constantly vigilant and then fighting the next immanent attack.

In every aspect of Oregonians' lives, from social to economic to health and human rights, the quality of environmental protections is of paramount importance. There can be no doubt this is an uncommonly commonsense approach to shielding us from harm by proactively asserting the importance of this right to a clean, safe, healthy environment: An amendment to the Constitution which is part of the Bill of Rights pertaining to all Oregonians and which no politician can later abrogate!

Economically, prevention is the wise alternative to what has been our legacy: waiting until such damage has been done and such education has been completed that the public outcry forces legislative action; Polluters and would-be polluters are legion in Oregon and will continue to be as long as there is no guardrail ensuring the citizens' right to protection.

This has been a detriment to the health and economy of our beautiful state. Let us take our responsibility seriously and pass this bill for all of us to vote upon. It is OUR health; the decision must be in our hands, not that of legislators who are burdened with conflicting interests!

In addition to the ineffectiveness of Oregon's current regulatory system, it also depends heavily on federal environmental laws including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Environmental Protection Agency's definitions of toxic levels to regulate our air, water, ecosystems, and climate systems. These bedrock environmental laws are in severe jeopardy with

the new administration's general approach against effective environmental protection. It is especially incumbent upon us Oregonians to take care of ourselves! No one will do it for us.

Thank you for taking my testimony.

May you have the strength, integrity and wisdom to pass SJR 28!