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On Behalf Of: 350Deschutes
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR28

From: Diane Hodiak, Executive Director, 350Deschutes, Bend, Oregon
To SJR 28-1 SUPPORTING the Right To a Healthy Environment

Thank you for allowing our testimony. I submit this on behalf of approximately 2,500 individuals who are stakeholders of our organization. We operate Statewide in Oregon, and focus on Central Oregon's 3 counties: Jefferson, Prineville, and Deschutes.

At a time when the environment is under attack more than ever, and rules are being torn down, we must reinforce our fundamental right to a healthy environment. We must encourage our government to uphold a health environment, in all its actions. We already know the death and disease that ensues when we allow unbridled pollution of our air, land, and water. Oregon's current system is an "after the fact" effort. We must act preemptively to ensure that dangerous and toxic pollution does not take place. In the long term, preventing toxic and harmful attacks on the environment is a more cost effective solution.

The Right to a Healthy Climate will protect the health and safety of Oregonians who are threatened by toxic pollutants in the air, water and soil and by climate change. This is about updating our constitution, and our rights, to protect us against the greatest threats we face today.

All rights come with implied responsibilities. Many people believe that environmental protections mean restrictions on your ability to do what you want on your land, but that's a common misunderstanding. Property rights are a "bundle of rights" such as the right to use, exclude, transfer, enjoy, and control various aspects of your land in accordance with the law (such as zoning codes).

There is no such thing as a right to pollute, especially if it negatively affects your neighbors or the interests of others "downstream," literally or figuratively.

The right will, however, help protect your use, enjoyment and value of your property by protecting it from harmful activities of others.