



To: Rules Committee

From: Prof. Janet Lorenzen & 350Salem OR

RE: Support for SJR 28 Right to a Healthy Environment

Date: March 25, 2025

Dear Chair Senator Jama, Vice-Chair Senator Bonham and members of the Committee:

I am Prof. Janet Lorenzen, I live in Salem, and I teach at Willamette University. I write on behalf of myself and the 300 members of 350Salem OR. Thank you for holding a hearing on SJR 28 the Right to a Healthy Environment.

As the Federal government dismantles the EPA, it is important that states and cities step up to shoulder more of the burden for safeguarding our health and the future livability of our shared environment.

Here's the problem, according to preliminary emissions data, [Oregon missed its 2020 GHG emission reduction goal by 13 percent. In 2021, the latest emissions data available, emissions grew to 19 percent above the 2020 goal.](#)

You have the opportunity to send this constitutional amendment to the voters and let the voters decide if we should do more to protect our health, our environment, and address climate change. **Let people vote!**

The amendment would protect public health and safety by requiring the state to prevent harm before it happens. The amendment is a preventive tool, to improve the oversight and regulation of industry by the Oregon state government. **It is far less costly to prevent environmental harm, than to clean it up afterwards.**

When the U.S. and Oregon constitutions were written, pollution meant nuisance issues like water pollution from tanneries. Today, the health and safety of Oregonians, particularly those in frontline communities 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.**

Oregonians' lives and futures depend on a safe and healthy environment. This amendment puts this key value, that all Oregonians hold, into our state constitution. **If passed by the voters, the government will be held accountable to doing a better job to prevent environmental threats to the health and safety of all Oregonians.**

Thank you,
Prof. Janet Lorenzen