

Submitter:

Gabriel Burke

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SJR28

Dear Chair Jama and Vice-Chair Bonham, and honored members of the Committee, thank you for the chance to comment on SRJ-28. As a climate activist, I have fought for my rights, the rights of my community members, and future generations to come. I feel that it is necessary to solidify the commitment by the State of Oregon to protect the health and safety of all Oregon residents now, and to come. I feel that climate protections are inalienable rights, and should be protected as such under the constitution.

I have personally witnessed increasing severity of extreme heat, ice storms, and wildfires. I know that there are many more struggles Oregon constituents face because of climate change. Oregonians residents should have their struggles recognized by their constitution. The diversity of struggles Oregonians face are unparalleled, and we all deserve to have our grievances represented. There is no question, in my mind, of whether climate change is real, there is no doubt in my mind that it is the actions of our government that contribute to it. I believe that it is my civic duty, and the civic duty of any citizen of Oregon, and of the United States, to petition the government for a redress of grievances, in the face of adversity, created by the actions of the government. SRJ-28 serves as an extension of rights protected under the first amendment, and as new dilemmas arise, our laws must reflect the updated struggle of our people.

No matter where individuals may live, no matter what they may believe, I believe everyone has the right to sue the government for allowing fossil fuel companies to continue mass extractions while their homes and farms burn, they suffer from heatstroke, lose power in ice storms, have their homes flooded, their crops fail, choke on wildfire smoke, and watch as everything and everyone they know and love is destroyed. In the midst of that, I believe that those individuals should be recognized over the profit incentives of mega corporations, who reap benefits from land on which they will not have to depend, on which they will not have to raise families or struggle to survive. Corporations can simply up and move to a new spot when land is decimated, but it is the people who are left with the mess. When these actions are state sanctioned, the people should have the right, protected under their constitution, to sue the state, and that is why I support SRJ-28, to empower the people, as was the wish of the founding fathers. Thank you for your time.