

Testimony in Support of SJR 28:

Good Evening,

I am a researcher in the energy sciences and a volunteer with 350 Deschutes here in Bend, but I call Redmond my home. Today, I write to you about three of Central Oregon's biggest issues: drought, wildfire, and climate change.

A growing body of scientific evidence is beginning to show that they are not separate issues but intimately tied together. Wildfire is also a personal issue to me because I have witnessed the emotional and physical devastation that it can cause firsthand. In 2015, I helped my father during the aftermath of the Canyon Creek Complex Fire that burned 33,000 acres of land south of John Day and nearly 2/3 of his neighbors' homes in a single day. While we were lucky enough to see my childhood home standing tall among the embers that day, no one should see their neighborhood burn.

That is why it is more important than ever as a community to start taking action against climate change. According to Climate Central and [NOAA](#) scientists, the extreme drought, heat, and winds of climate change are creating mega fires, which are almost impossible to contain. This contributes to a fire season that is 30 days longer. According to the [Oregonian](#), the top five largest wildfires in Oregon's history have occurred within the last 25 years. For context, the sixth most damaging wildfire (which occurred in 1933) was less than half the size of the record holder. What's worse: **A headwaters economics report** [found that almost half of the costs of wildfire](#) are paid for at the local level, including lives lost as well as the economic costs to homeowners, businesses, and government agencies.

Every year that we delay serious climate action, we increase the risks of intense wildfires and the damage they cause to our economy, health, and personal wellbeing. Oregonians will continue to suffer the negative effects when businesses have to close or cancel events from dangerous air quality, and we are forced to stay indoors. That is why I call on you to do the right thing, pass SJR 28, and place the right to a healthy environment on the ballot next year. If we don't protect our environment, many of us will soon lose the ability to protect our homes, our farms, and our water supplies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Noel Nelson