

Submitter: Anne Dale
On Behalf Of: self and fellow citizens
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR28

Dear Chair Jama and committee members,

I write this written testimony in support of SJR28 to protect our Right to a Healthy Environment. I grew up hiking at camp and with family in old growth forests along clean rivers and lakes, abundant with aquatic life and land-based wildlife. Today I am more likely to encounter polluted waterways with unhealthy fish and fewer signs of balanced wildlife populations. I pass by wildfire areas that will take generations to recover and over 80 years or more to replace the Pacific NW old growth woods in Oregon and surrounding states from California to Alaska. Our temperate rain forests have the tallest trees in the world and provide incredible carbon sequestration rather than carbon pollution. Their environmental protection is comparable to tropical rain forests. We have the legislative means to protect them through SJR28.

Other signs concern me and make the passage of SJF28 critical. Between 1990 and 2020 the heat index in the PDX area was 90 degrees on 11 days and it's estimated to increase to 52 days per year by 2099. We know 2024 was our hottest year on record. About 50% of precipitation that falls between 2025 and 2099 will be as rain rather than the slow-melting snow pack we need for fish runs, farming and prevention of forest fires. Drought will increase stress on farms, ranches, on the fishing industry, with fewer mental health resources to address the stress. Fires are often human caused from sparks rather than arson, but both causes are tragic. Environmental scientists anticipate the wildfires and smoke will increase from now until 2099. Without resilience hubs or cooling stations and proper ventilation as many as 98 vulnerable people will again die alone during heat waves.

Protecting our old growth forests from wildfires and timber cutting will help control rising temperatures and prevent carbon pollution. Our native Pacific Northwest temperate rain forest will be part of the solution to reduce temperatures and keep the air and waterways less polluted. It is fair that carbon polluters contribute funding to reduce climate change damage. Our own Oregon children introduced a lawsuit that inspired others in the country to also work for the Right to a Healthy Environment. Let's do what we can with SJF28 to protect and improve this wonderful state.

Thank you, Anne Dale, Hillsboro, OR voter