

Dear Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support SB 1178. As a child, I was taught that I was responsible for cleaning up my own messes and not depending on others to do so. This is, I believe, the principle underlying SB 1178. Fossil fuel companies have profited and continue to profit handsomely from selling coal and oil products for combustion but have escaped any responsibility for the costs of their actions, which have been transferred to the public.

I am a scientist and retired professor of Biology at Lewis & Clark College, and I am well acquainted with the principle of cause and effect. Extensive and incontrovertible evidence has established that greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels are the primary cause of the unprecedented rapidity and magnitude of the climate change this planet has experienced over the last two centuries. And it is further clear that the changing climate has produced widespread episodes of extreme weather, serious public health outcomes such as heat-caused deaths, and desiccation of the forests that underpins the extreme wildfires that now plague our state. That is, burning of fossil fuels is directly responsible for property damage and injuries to human health in our community.

Given that large fossil fuel companies have been highly profitable and that the consequences of their businesses have been harmful here in Oregon and elsewhere, it seems only fair to me that they be asked to help clean up the mess that they have created. SB 1178 would require them to contribute some of their profits to help underwrite the costs of fighting wildfires and provide resources for those who are recovering from damages from wildfires or preparing to reduce their risks. This seems the very essence of fair play to me, and I am very much in favor of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gary Reiness