

My name is Paulette Bierzychudek and I am an Oregon resident from Senate district 21. I have a doctorate in ecology and have studied and taught climate science for decades. I write to offer my strong support for SB 1187, Oregon's Polluter Pays Bill.

The climate crisis is real and has been documented and confirmed by numerous scientific studies. Its effects are being felt on a daily basis in Oregon. We now understand that enriched greenhouse gases cause far more climatic effects than simply warming – they also cause more extreme weather events like the intensified droughts, heat “domes,” and hurricanes we have experienced in recent years. These events have already cost Oregonians millions of dollars, and those costs will continue to increase as CO₂ levels continue to rise.

Companies that profit from the manufacture and sale of fossil fuels have long known about the consequences of atmospheric CO₂ enrichment. In an article that appeared on Oct. 25, 2023 in Common Home, a publication of Georgetown University's Institute for Environment and Sustainability, (<https://commonhome.georgetown.edu/topics/climateenergy/defense-denial-and-disinformation-uncovering-the-oil-industrys-early-knowledge-of-climate-change/>) , Charlotte Taylor documents that oil industry executives have understood since 1959 that fossil fuel burning contributed to climate change. In response, oil companies developed a campaign of denial and misinformation – similar to tobacco companies' response to emerging information about the link between cigarette smoking and cancer. Publications like Scientific American, Science, The Guardian, and the Harvard Gazette – even Wikipedia -- have confirmed these findings.

In Oct. 2024, the Forum on Oregon Climate Economics estimated (<https://www.sustainable-economy.org/economic-costs-of-climate-change-in-oregon-a-first-look>) that the average Oregonian “could lose \$12,000 in income per year due to climate changes that have already been set in motion.” They further estimated that the 2021 heat dome cost Oregonians over one billion dollars just in terms of loss of life alone. These are just a few examples of the data in their report. Fossil fuel companies accumulate billions of dollars in profits, but they bear no responsibility for the massive costs of their activities. SB 1187 would address this inequity by requiring those companies to contribute to paying the costs of damages they have created.

Many of those who have submitted testimony in opposition to SB 1187 regard the climate crisis as a hoax. Instead of seeking out scientific evidence, they believe the lies and disinformation that fossil fuel companies – and politicians who benefit from their support – have promoted. We cannot allow these misguided voices to prevent us from seeking redress for the environmental harms that fossil fuel companies have created. Please support SB 1157.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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