

Submitter: Elizabeth Dix

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1187

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and members of the Committee:

My name is Elizabeth and I'm a member of Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter who cares about climate solutions and having a healthy world for my daughter's future. I am writing to ask you to support SB 1187 which creates a Climate Superfund— paid for by the biggest polluters— to help Oregonians adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Oregonians cannot keep paying for the costs of the impacts of climate change while fossil fuel companies continue to pocket billions of dollars in profit. According to the 2024 Joint Staff Report of the United States House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, the major fossil fuel companies have known since the 1960s, I repeat the 1960's, that burning fossil fuels causes climate change, and “then worked for decades to undermine public understanding of this fact and to deny the underlying science.” I won't get into the further negative repercussions our state and country currently face due to that intentional deterioration of science and fact. It is time fossil fuel companies should pay for knowingly causing this problem.

We are already seeing worsening storm and fire seasons within our own state and continuous and costly climate impacts across the country. Insurance companies are raising rates and leaving markets and states are having a harder time accessing FEMA funds to rebuild. Do we also want to continue having the government subsidize fossil fuel on the front and back end too through costly rebuilding programs? To ensure affected Oregonians' needs are met, we need new funding sources. Who better to pay the bill than the highly profitable fossil fuel companies that contributed to these disasters?

We know it's difficult in a capitalist economy to make business pay, but this bill is carefully designed: It would require the fossil fuel firms who have been proven to be the most responsible for the problem to pay a share of past damages arising from climate change during 1995-2024, a period of time over which the amounts of fossil fuels extracted and sold by the large companies have been reliably tracked. From this, it's documented how much greenhouse gas each company is responsible for during that time period. Experts in Oregon agencies working with climate and environmental scientists can make reliable estimates of financial damages from climate change from 1995-2024, and large fossil fuel interests would be required to pay only in proportion to their documented negative impact.

I am happy that the bill breaks down silos between different government agencies so that the Climate Superfund can be deployed efficiently and effectively for climate change adaptation, resilience, and repair projects within the state. The joint expertise of Oregon departments of Emergency Management, Land Conservation and Development, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality, the Oregon Health Authority and the State Fire Marshall will develop and implement needed projects across the state: climate resilience plans that support healthy lives and livelihoods by addressing issues affecting communities urban and rural, desert and coastal, and infrastructure that is human-built and natural (such as wetlands and riparian areas).

The bill importantly dedicates 40% of the funds collected to frontline communities most exposed to climate damages, and 30% of funds specifically to making Oregon more resilient to wildfires.

Please support Oregonians and climate justice by supporting SB 1187.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Elizabeth Dix