

Submitter: KATHALEEN PARKER
On Behalf Of: SIERRA CLUB of OREGON
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1187

re: SB1187 - This Act creates a program to recover the costs of climate change.

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee,

Even if we stopped all pollution today, legacy emissions from the last 40 years will continue to cause damage and cost Oregonians millions. Polluters pay is not a new idea, and reflects the basic fairness of “you make a mess, you clean it up”.

It is now well documented that Exxon hired scientists more than 30 years ago to study the effects of their fossil fuel product, found out it was detrimental to all living species, and then lied about their findings, single-handedly killing the Kyoto Protocol which was our first attempt to tackle climate change in a meaningful way in the 1990s. The level of deceit is of epic proportions. At this point, to allow the fossil fuel industry to continue business as usual, without holding them accountable, is enabling an industry that is proven criminal in its wanton fraud and disregard for its actions which are currently leading all species, including the human race, towards a massive extinction event.

I have a story here to share about Peter Barnes (American entrepreneur, environmentalist, and journalist)...His work has been focused on fixing the deepest flaws of capitalism. Barnes, an innovative thinker, wrote a book called 'Who Owns the Sky?'(2001) and a few years later wrote a book called 'Capitalism 3.0: A Guide to Reclaiming the Commons'(2006).

"And the obvious question is, well, who does own the sky? It doesn't have any legal owners at the moment, but morally who owns it. And it seemed to me the right answer to that question was all of us together, that the atmosphere is a gift of creation, whether there's a God involved doesn't matter. And if it goes to, belongs to anybody, it belongs to all of us equally. And simultaneously as the co-inheritors, we have a duty to preserve the integrity of the atmosphere or any ecosystem for the benefit of future generations.

But then the question was okay, how do you manifest that idea in a legal structure and introduce it into the economy, so that the economy sees the atmosphere as a commonly owned asset? And that's what led up to this book about universal property.

What I proposed was that with universal property here is a way to solve that problem by giving future generations and all of us as a whole, as opposed to all of us as

individuals competing with other individuals, give those key stakeholders a voice in the markets, give them property rights, which would allow them to set prices on what are now these harms that are limitless and don't have any prices." (Peter Barnes)

Oregonians are paying for polluters' damage. SB1187 is an interagency response to the effects of climate change. The bill establishes a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program Account, separate from the Treasury's General Fund. Within the funds dispersed, 30% must be allocated to wildfire prevention and 40% to environmental justice communities.

"Society is indeed a contract...between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born." ~ Edmund Burke (1792)

We need your help to support SB 1187: Make Polluters Pay in our public hearing on April 7th in Senate Energy and Environment!

Thank You