

Submitter: Laurie Dougherty

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1187

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee:

My name is Laurie Dougherty, and I live in Salem. I strongly support SB 1187 which “Establishes the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program as an interagency response to the effects of climate change.” Through their own research the major fossil fuel companies have known for decades that emissions from their products harm our climate. I have studied climate change in university classes and continue to read and learn about the causes and impacts of climate change. What I have learned has caused me great concern and led me to become an advocate for a safe, clean renewable energy system.

The fossil fuel industry has enormous financial capacity, technological expertise, and political clout that could be devoted to a renewable energy transformation. However, the industry has deliberately and knowingly chosen to use their vast resources to continue with business as usual, to protect their profits, to influence policy in their favor, to malign any opposition, and to deceive the public about the science of climate change, its impacts, and potential alternatives. The industry pays lip service to alternative energy while continuing to drill, frack, mine, refine and ship coal, oil and gas, leaving ruined ecosystems, toxic waste, and contaminated communities in a dangerously altered climate.

Some of the disastrous impacts of climate change that have particularly affected Oregon include more days of extreme heat and disturbances to precipitation patterns. These changes contribute to increases in the frequency, intensity, and duration of droughts, floods, storms and wildfires. The costs of damage from and adaptation to climate change have been borne by Oregon residents and communities, and by local, state and federal governments using our taxes.

We learn as children to clean up our own mess. If a neighbor’s child hits a ball that breaks your window, you expect the neighbor to pay to fix it. If a driver runs a red light and crashes into your car, you expect the driver to pay for damage to the vehicle and injury to the occupants, if any. This is the principle behind SB 1187. It is not tax. It will, in fact, relieve some of the burden on our taxes. It is, as the bill title says, a recovery of the cost of damages from the responsible parties. The recovered funds will be used to build Oregon’s capacity to adapt to and manage impacts of the changing climate. It’s past time to require climate polluters to pay for the damage they cause.

I urge you to vote Yes with a Do Pass recommendation on SB 1187. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.