

Submitter: Joseph Stenger

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 Committee:

My name is Joseph Stenger MD. I urge your YES vote for SB1187.

My parents taught me to clean up my messes. Big corporations have made a mess of our environment. They need to pay to clean it up. These are natural resources that we own in common. Businesses that have released toxic products should pay to correct the problems that have resulted.

Just like tobacco and opioid companies before them, major polluting corporations knew the damage that they were causing to our climate, and rather than preventing that damage, they conducted public relations campaigns to mislead the public about the issue. This policy of inaction and of disinformation has forced our state, counties and cities to bear huge costs, paid for by all of us.

We all suffered through the heat dome. Over a hundred of us died. There was a large loss of crops (such as fruit and Christmas trees) and swaths of damage in our forests. Power lines melted. Small businesses lost revenue. And that was just one single event.

(<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/northwest/topic/2021-northwest-heat-dome-causes-impacts-and-future-outlook>)

According to OPB, "In 2017, statewide tourism losses due to wildfire and smoke were \$51.5 million, according to a Travel Oregon report." We know that worse and even more costly events are coming.

Corporations profited hugely from activities that contributed to the present hotter weather, drier summers, more destructive downpours, and devastating wildfires. It is fair to expect them to pay for mitigating the harms.

State agencies led by DLCD will assess economic damage attributed to past corporate activities and design a resilience plan to direct expenditures to address mitigation.

At this time of state and federal funding cutbacks, it is imperative to stop letting complicit corporations avoid penalty for their damage to public resources. Make polluters pay!

I appreciate all you do for the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,
Joseph Stenger MD