



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1187

TO: Senate Committee on Energy & the Environment

FROM: Antonia Langowski, Environmental Justice Project Coordinator

DATE: April 7, 2025

RE: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1187

Chair Sollman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Antonia Langowski. I am the Environmental Justice Project Coordinator at the Northwest Environmental Defense Center (“NEDC”) and a third-year law student at Lewis & Clark Law School, where I specialize in Environmental and Natural Resources Law. I’m here today to voice my strong support for Senate Bill (“SB”) 1187.

First, I want to express how proud I am to be studying environmental law in Oregon—a state where a deep respect for nature is not only widely shared, but often seen as common sense. However, while this environmental ethic is something to be proud of, it’s crucial to acknowledge that Oregon still has significant work to do in addressing environmental justice (“EJ”). Despite its progressive reputation, the benefits of environmental protection and the burdens of environmental harm have not been equally distributed. Many communities continue to face disproportionate exposure to pollution, climate-related health risks, and environmental degradation.¹

As an aspiring environmental advocate, particularly in EJ, I view it as both a privilege and a responsibility to highlight these injustices and work toward a future where all Oregonians, regardless of race, income, ZIP code, or immigration status, can enjoy a healthy environment. When we discuss the costs of climate change, we’re not just talking about money. We’re talking about children suffering from asthma due to diesel pollution, our grandparents dying in heat waves, families displaced by floods, and communities grieving the loss of their homes to fire. We’re talking about mental health crises, cultural loss, food insecurity, and trauma.

¹ For instance, during the 2021 heat dome in the PNW, low-income families across Oregon were subjected to record-breaking heat without access to cooling or clean water. Worse, farmworkers—many of whom are immigrants and people of color—were forced to work in this dangerous heat without adequate protection. These disparities are not accidents; they stem from systemic inequities that have long influenced how environmental policies are created and enforced. (see https://www.opalpdx.org/ej_faqs & <https://www.opb.org/article/2024/07/03/oregon-getting-hotter-record-breaking-heat-wave-climate-change/>).



These are not isolated incidents. They are systemic, predictable outcomes of a system where fossil fuel companies have been allowed to pollute without consequence.² For decades, the largest oil and gas corporations have knowingly contributed to this crisis—profiting from pollution while externalizing the human costs onto the rest of us.³

SB 1187 seeks to rebalance this injustice. It does not punish polluters—it holds them accountable. It asks companies who have made billions in profit while knowingly fueling climate change to pay their fair share toward the costs of recovery and resilience. The funds recovered from these companies would go where they are critically needed: into wildfire recovery, green infrastructure, clean water systems, cooling centers, and climate adaptation projects that prioritize the most impacted communities. In other words, SB 1187 is a critical step toward building a more equitable and sustainable future for Oregon. It acknowledges that EJ is not a luxury but a necessity for our most vulnerable communities, who have borne the brunt of environmental harm for far too long.

Moreover, this bill serves as a powerful message to other states and to the nation—that Oregon is committed to environmental justice and will take decisive steps to ensure a healthier, more sustainable future for *all* its residents. By prioritizing recovery and resilience efforts, SB 1187 sets a model for how we can tackle the crises of both climate change and inequality.

With that said, I urge you all to support SB 1187. As I approach law school graduation in about a month, I reflect on my journey in environmental law and the privilege of learning in a state whose natural beauty and commitment to sustainability have shaped my values. Oregon has long been a leader in environmental protection, but there is still much work to be done to ensure that all communities are equally protected. SB 1187 represents an opportunity to take meaningful action toward a more just and resilient future for every Oregonian.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for your commitment to environmental justice.

Sincerely,

Antonia Langowski

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² See Timothy Q. Donaghy et al., *Fossil fuel racism in the United States: How phasing out coal, oil, and gas can protect communities*, 100 ENERGY RSCH. & SOC. SCI. 1, 10–11 (2022).

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/30/climate-crimes-oil-and-gas-environment>.