

Submitter: Bill Hall
On Behalf Of: Neighbors Ready
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1187

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee,
I am writing to ask for your support on SB 1187: Make Polluters Pay. This bill had a public hearing in the Senate Energy and Environment Committee on Monday, April 7th will have a possible work session scheduled for Wednesday, April 9.

This bill is important to me because the current federal administration is moving to reduce accountability for the major petroleum and fossil fuel firms throughout the country by loosening or eliminating regulations and encouraging more unregulated development of fossil fuel extraction. This new regulation environment will leave our state and others to foot the entire bill for cleaning up after the widespread actions resulting in pollution by these firms.

I belong to a non-profit disaster preparedness organization working to get neighborhoods prepared as climate and geological impacts increase. Our suburban neighborhood came close to evacuation in the 2020 wildfire season which resulted in the destruction of thousands of homes and a million acres of ravaged forest. We also have friends who lost their homes and are now struggling to recover from the disasters.

We have all benefited from the petroleum industry, but our society has never held them accountable for the full impact of their activities. I taught my children accountability. I expect you have done the same in your families. We need not view industrial accountability as punishment. It is simply common sense. It's time to recognize, acknowledge and pay the real price. It's going to cost our state more and more to deal with the results of environmental abuse, and the organizations which are responsible for it should join the effort.

Oregon's Polluter Pays bill would require large fossil fuel firms to pay compensation for past climate change damages. It is based on the principle that those responsible for creating pollution have a moral obligation to make amends. The approach is analogous to other, well-established federal and state programs that impose strict liability for cleaning up past pollution. Comparable Climate Superfund bills have been enacted in Vermont and New York and are being considered in several other US states.

For these reasons, I urge your support for SB 1187. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Bill Hall