

Submitter: Ken Wilkins
On Behalf Of: concerned residents
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1187

Dear Oregon State Senators and Representatives:

I write to request your SUPPORT for Senate Bill 1187, that establishes a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program. I am a professor emeritus of biology who has taught and researched in ecology and environmental biology and a board member of 350Deschutes. Thank you for opportunity to offer written testimony.

This situation is analogous to the tobacco settlement of the 1990's. Corporate Tobacco knew early on the damage being done to the health of smokers and non-smokers alike, but they hid it. They were finally held accountable and paid steep penalties and were forced to make drastic changes in their models for doing business.

Similarly, Big Oil has known for decades—from their own in-house research—the damage that emissions from combustion of fossil fuels was causing. They knew that accumulation of greenhouse gases was (and still is) causing excessive heating of Earth's atmosphere and waters at a rate never before seen in human history. They knew of the myriad adverse trickle-down impacts this was having on human and environmental health. But, not only did they continue to produce fossil fuels, but they lobbied hard and effectively both to squelch this knowledge and to discredit independent scientists who were documenting the damage done and linking global heating directly to combustion of fossil fuels.

Why would Big Oil do this, despite knowing the damage being caused by their products? The simple answer—corporate greed. We truly are in Climate Crisis, brought on almost entirely by combustion of fossil fuels. We must end reliance on fossil fuels. The only way that corporate interests will listen is to make it too expensive not to listen.

SB 1187 will go far toward getting the attention of Big Oil, making them realize that this business model based on petroleum will no longer be profitable. The penalties they pay will also serve to repair some of the damage they've done over past decades.

Thank you for passing legislation that will allow a liveable planet for future generations.