



Oregon Synod

Walking Together Into Courageous Love

April 7th, 2025

To: Senate Committee

Subject: Support for SB 1187

Chair Sollman and members of the committee,

My name is Sarah Loose and I serve as Director of Disaster & Climate Resilience for the Oregon Synod, a body of over 100 ministries of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) throughout the state of Oregon. I'm testifying in support of SB1187.

SB1187 is an expression of a core tenet of my faith and a functioning society: our communities flourish when we *all* share responsibility for caring for one another and the earth.

This notion underlies the work I get to do each and everyday – accompanying local congregations and their neighbors in working together to build more resilient communities and in recovering from disasters. To see neighbors helping neighbors in times of crises is a testament to the best of our human spirit, and a window into a future where all Oregonians belong.

Unfortunately, the number and scale of disasters we're seeing here in Oregon is increasing. And with them the mounting costs for our communities - costs both material as well as emotional and spiritual.

The generosity of Lutherans in Oregon and across the country through our national partner, Lutheran Disaster Response, has allowed our Oregon Synod's Disaster & Climate Resilience team to provide critical funding to help meet the urgent and ongoing recovery needs of disaster survivors in Oregon (such as those who are *still* recovering from the 2020 wildfires, five years later), when insurance, FEMA and state funding run dry. But there's simply no way these systems as currently structured (which frankly, were never designed to make communities whole post disaster in the first place), let alone philanthropic partners or neighbors helping neighbors (no matter how generous) can ever possibly cover the skyrocketing costs of past and anticipated future climate damages for Oregon's communities and ecosystems.

Everyday Oregonians are digging deeper and deeper into our own threadbare pockets, while billionaire oil and gas executives are padding their own off the profits of their pollution.

This is greed, plain and simple. It's what got us into this mess in the first place.

It's time to restore balance – on our sacred landscapes, with a return to a more healthy relationship with fire and greater reciprocity in our human relationship with the rest of Creation. And also to our economic systems, so that all pay their fair share, and all have enough. This is part of what SB1187 will make possible.

To reiterate, at a time when:

- *Oregon's legislature is scrambling to cover the mounting costs of wildfires with our limited tax-payer dollars*
- *The federal government is slashing positions, revoking resilience funding, and backtracking on all climate-related commitments*
- *You, me, and our neighbors are paying the price of climate pollution through our compromised health, rising insurance rates, homes lost to fires, crops lost to drought, and wages lost to extreme heat and storms*

Oregon's **Make Polluters Pay** bill will recover *billions* of dollars for critical wildfire recovery and climate adaptation projects, and for the Oregonians impacted most by climate damages, from the biggest oil, coal, and gas companies who've been profiting off this pollution for decades.

On a more personal note, I am a parent of two elementary school children who have lost many, many school days to extreme weather events, and whose mental health is impacted by the fear of wildfires and anxiety over an overheated earth.

I urge you to join me in showing them - and all of their peers throughout the state - that here in Oregon we can do better. We can ensure that Polluters pay. We can build an Oregon where all can flourish.

Sincerely,
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