

**JEFF GOLDEN**  
**STATE SENATOR**  
DISTRICT 3



**OREGON STATE SENATE**

April 7, 2025

Madame Chair....thanks

With so many people waiting to speak, let me just read a brief list of facts we know to be true:

1. Along with most states, Oregon is annually experiencing so-called “natural catastrophes”—we need some air quotes here—that dwarf the few we remember from our childhood.
2. These catastrophes inflict damages on people, property and communities that regularly run into the billions of dollars...often many billions of dollars.
3. These are bills we have no realistic way to pay for. We’re struggling to pay for any of the **preventative** programs that could spare us from billion-dollar plus catastrophes next year and the year after that and the year after that.
4. The scientific consensus is all but unanimous that climate change fuels and intensifies these events.
5. One specific industry’s products are centrally responsible for anthropogenic climate change, and some of their internal communications show our current crisis is one they generally anticipated **decades** ago.
6. Industry spent tens of millions of marketing dollars claiming otherwise—claiming that ‘there’s nothing to see here’—in a way that dramatically slowed the development of clean energy sources.
7. The absence of those clean sources locked in a global dependence on their product that turbocharged profits into the hundreds of billions of dollars, so that to this day they’re among the wealthiest enterprises in human history.

Those are the facts that make this bill so compelling to me. I know that some will find this bill startling, and if our frame of reference is business as usual, it *is*. But there are two options here, Madame Chair: One, we join other states in holding the enormously profitable industry whose products fuel these catastrophes responsible for some of the damage, or 2) we turn away and keep this crushing financial burden on the shoulders of Oregon families and taxpayers who didn’t cause these fires, and in some cases have had their lives devastated by them.

If we do that—if we keep the status quo and Oregonians want to know why, what do we say? That Polluter Pays isn’t fair or rational? That’s clearly not true. That the implementation details haven’t been worked out? That’s not true either; this bill lays out a practical blueprint developed over a decade of research and analysis.

Or maybe we’d lean into the truth and say the political winds just blow too hard in the other direction. It seems to me we say that, or at least think that, far too often. *This* time, let’s find the courage to do what I believe most of us know to be fair. Polluter Pays is fair, and SB 1187 is the blueprint for establishing it.