

Thank you to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education. My name is Breck Foster, and I urge you to vote yes on SB 5525. As a high school social studies teacher in the Portland Metro area with a strong interest in sustainability and climate education in schools, I've been highly impressed with OSU's Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI) and hope to see their funding continue. Their commitment to serving as a statewide source of expertise and scientific research for educators and community-based organizations accelerates Oregonians ability to adapt to and mitigate climate change in our unique regions and using local decision-making and solutions. This makes continued state funding essential for this critical work across our state.

I was first introduced to OCCRI Director Dr. Erica Fleishman's team while serving on the Oregon Green Schools Board. Through a youth and schools climate education group from Eastern Oregon, I met OCCRI professor Dr. Dominique Bachelet. Over the past four years, I've witnessed both of these experts' dedication to reaching beyond the I-5 corridor to understand diverse regional and socio-economic perspectives. As a teacher, I've personally used OCCRI's credible, place-based research—beginning with the Oregon Climate Assessments.

Dr. Fleishman effectively brings together experts from both sides of the Cascades for county-level assessments. OCCRI professors teach students how to communicate science findings clearly. Their work extends into K-12 education, as Dr. Fleishman and Dr. Bachelet have presented findings to educators statewide, offering invaluable professional development and connecting teachers and community groups to high-quality resources.

OCCRI's reports help me prepare my own students to think critically about climate change, its causes and effects, and how to engage civically in developing common ground solutions. Please support this essential work by voting yes on SB 5525.