

May 1, 2025

Co-Chairs Gorsek and Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kathryn Duvall and I am the Chief of Staff for the Legislature's Environmental Caucus, although today I am writing on my own behalf, not speaking for the Caucus. I'm writing to request you consider finding a solution to the staffing issues that leave Legislative staff with unmanageable workloads and inadequate support during the interim and short session.

My position as Environmental Caucus staffer was created to better support legislators in the building and constituents and organizations outside of the building. Since the creation of this position two years ago, I've heard many times how helpful it is to have a staffer for the Environmental Caucus. I help legislators with constituent responses to environmental and energy issues, organize informational sessions on timely topics, assist with policy development and coalition building, liaise with environmental organizations, write newsletters, and maintain communications with advocates on a variety of policy topics. Proof of how valuable a position like mine can be is that there are now at least four Caucus staffers for a variety of policy areas.

My position is a unique one in the Legislature, cobbled together by legislators who care deeply about environmental protection and stewardship. These legislators scrape together funds from their office budgets to continue to have an Environmental Caucus staffer. This is a big ask, as you know how hard it is for most offices to find *any* extra money in their budgets. In my two years on this job, there has rarely been a time when I haven't had one eye anxiously on the calendar, wondering if my bosses will have enough funding for me to have a job in a few months.

A solution to the current staffing issues will help better support Caucus staff as well as individual offices. I work closely with Legislators' staff and rely heavily on them for scheduling, sharing information with their bosses, and providing feedback on concerns from constituents. Everyone from interns to Chiefs are critical for me to do my job well and I greatly appreciate working with the highly qualified and dedicated staff in my Caucus members' offices. Adequate staffing supports all of us, even in ways that go unseen.

I hope you seriously consider all the options available to you to support Legislative staff as we move towards the end of this session and are forced to cut some incredible people that help make this building work.

Thank you,

Kathryn Duvall