

Submitter:

Gabriel Burke

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3365

Dear Chair Pham and members of the Senate Education Committee, good morning, my name is Gabriel Burke, I thank you for reading my testimony today. I believe every Oregonian, and indeed every individual, is entitled to education on the climate crisis. I did not receive any formal education on climate change until I reached sophomore year of high school. I have been a climate activist in Eugene throughout my high school career. As that part of my life comes to a close, as I prepare to graduate, this is my last opportunity to speak to you from a first person experience as a high school student. For the past 2 years, I have advocated for a climate education bill, first as SB-854, and now as HB-3365. To be frank, I am growing tired of writing this testimony over and over again. I cannot stress enough that I am not coming back to the state capitol time and time again because I enjoy legislation, but because I feel it is my duty as an activist to safeguard the future of my generation. This means fighting for our rights, and for tools we need to innovate new solutions, to persevere in the face of adversity.

I know that hundreds of thousands of Oregonians living in rural communities will never get any education on climate change without this bill, despite being on the front lines of the disasters that will come out of it. The climate crisis is something everyone in my generation will struggle with. It is of paramount importance that we are educated on the struggles we will face in our lives, so that we may fight for our own future. Every year, Oregonians see more extreme wildfires and droughts. Rainfall patterns will likely soon also become unpredictable. This jeopardizes the health and safety of all Oregonians, and especially rural communities living off the land. The truth is that we are no longer asking if we will face threats from climate change as a result of GHG emissions, these threats are now becoming realities. Make no mistake, fires WILL spread, crops WILL fail, water shortages WILL happen, people WILL die, people DO die. Oregonians on the front lines live these realities every day. Allow my generation, and generations to come, to have our best chance to save our futures, and perhaps, to prosper. Let us raise new generations of innovators, problem solvers, and creators. Pass HB3365.

I thank you for your time, your public service, and for hearing my testimony here today.

Gabriel Burke, Churchill High School, Eugene.
CHS Climate Action Club, 4j Climate Justice Team.