

Support-HB3365

Dear Chair Pham and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Tana Shepard and I am a K-12 Climate, Energy, and Conservation Teacher in Eugene and a founding member of Oregon Educators for Climate Education.

Many people argue that elementary students are too young to learn about climate change, fearing it might be too scary or overwhelming. But after years of teaching in elementary classrooms, I can confidently say that K-5 students are actually the ideal age to start learning about how our planet works. They're at a stage where they can understand the interconnectedness of life and how human actions are accelerating environmental changes. The goal isn't to indoctrinate them—it's to equip them with knowledge that helps reduce anxiety and empowers them to take action.

When students have hands-on experiences, like school gardens or outdoor field trips, they develop a deep love for the planet. I've seen firsthand how their eyes light up with excitement when they make a new discovery in nature. This engagement not only helps them connect with the world around them but also encourages them to think critically and positively about how they can make a difference.

House Bill 3365 supports this by ensuring that climate change education is integrated into the curriculum in a way that's age-appropriate, aligned with standards, and relevant to their lives. It helps students understand the challenges we face, but more importantly, it empowers them with the tools to innovate and adapt for the future.

By supporting HB3365, we're giving our youth the opportunity to build resilience, take meaningful action, and shape a more sustainable future for themselves and their communities. I urge you to vote for House Bill 3365—for the future of our children, our state, and our planet. Thank you.