

Support HB 3365 – Testimony for the Senate Education Committee

Dear Chair Fredrick and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Tana Shepard. I am a K–12 Climate, Energy, and Conservation teacher in Eugene and a founding member of Oregon Educators for Climate Education. I write today to express my strong support for House Bill 3365.

Some may believe that climate change is too complex or distressing a topic for elementary students—but in my experience, nothing could be further from the truth. After years of teaching in K–5 classrooms, I’ve seen how deeply curious and capable our youngest learners are. At this age, students are naturally inclined to explore the world around them and are forming lifelong values. They are not overwhelmed by learning about climate change—instead, they are inspired by it. When taught in an age-appropriate, solutions-focused way, climate education doesn’t cause fear—it builds empowerment, curiosity, and a sense of agency.

Unfortunately, in our elementary schools, instructional time for science, social studies, and health has shrunk in favor of core subjects like reading, writing, and math. That’s why HB 3365 is so critical. It supports the integration of climate change education across subjects—particularly within English Language Arts, where students can read about real-world issues, write persuasively, and discuss possible solutions. In math, students can analyze real climate data, apply problem-solving to sustainability challenges, and connect numbers to meaningful global and local issues. Climate change isn’t just a science topic—it’s a cross-curricular opportunity to make learning more engaging, relevant, and impactful.

I’ve watched students’ eyes light up during hands-on learning experiences—whether planting in school gardens, observing salmon in their habitats, exploring nature during outdoor school, or simply asking questions about the world they live in. These experiences help them connect emotionally and intellectually to the planet. They also spark the kind of critical thinking and collaboration skills we know are essential for the 21st century.

HB 3365 ensures that Oregon’s climate education is developmentally appropriate, rooted in standards, and locally relevant. It prepares students not just to understand the challenges we face, but to help lead the solutions. And in doing so, it gives them a reason to stay and invest in Oregon’s future—our communities, economy, and environment.

By supporting this bill, you are helping to cultivate resilience, hope, and leadership in Oregon's young people. I urge you to pass HB 3365—for the future of our children, our communities, and our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tana Shepard

K-12 Climate, Energy, and Conservation Teacher

Eugene, OR

Founding Member, Oregon Educators for Climate Education