

Submitter:

Nicole Butler-Hooten

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3365

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and Committee Members,

As a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz and the San Carlos Apache Tribe, an elementary educator deeply invested in place-based learning, and Oregon's 2021 Teacher of the Year, I recognize the enduring importance of House Bill 3365 for normalizing climate change education across Oregon. The collaborative work that has gone into this bill since 2020 has consistently aimed to elevate Tribal History | Shared History and Tribe-specific resources, understanding their profound connections to the lands and waters we inhabit. The health of our air, water, land, and biodiversity, stewarded since time immemorial by the Indigenous Peoples of this place, remains critically threatened, and it is imperative that students grasp these interconnected realities.

The amended bill's directive to integrate climate-related standards into core subjects provides a crucial framework for this understanding. At the elementary level, this can powerfully intersect with Tribal History | Shared History by examining Indigenous ecological knowledge and sustainable lifeways that have maintained balance with the environment for millennia. Studying local water flow or seasonal changes can be enriched by understanding traditional Tribal perspectives on these natural cycles. Upper elementary grades can explore the impact of air quality on Indigenous health, learn about Tribal initiatives focused on ecological restoration and sustainability, and investigate the traditional cultivation practices that nurture healthy soil for Indigenous plants and support local food sovereignty.

In its implementation, the bill could be seen as an invitation to integrate Indigenous perspectives on climate change, emphasizing the deep historical and ongoing relationships between Tribal Nations and their environments. By ensuring climate change education is embedded within core subjects, we create consistent opportunities to highlight Indigenous sovereignty in land and resource management, the multifaceted and timeless history of adaptation to environmental changes, and the enduring cultural values and languages that carry vital ecological knowledge. The framework offered by this bill can also facilitate Tribal History | Shared History's "Critical Orientations," ensuring students understand that they are on Indigenous homelands, that Indigenous peoples are still present, and that Indigenous perspectives offer crucial analyses of power dynamics and environmental stewardship.

My daughter, a current 8th grader in Eugene, is currently learning about her carbon

footprint and the impacts we all have on our atmosphere and environment. She shared with me that she wishes she would have learned about this earlier in her schooling experience as to better understand the unintentional impacts on our environment. When our early learners begin to wonder and get curious about being a good caretaker of our lands and water, that is what this House Bill is about.

Passing HB 3365 is a vital step forward in ensuring that our students learn about the urgent challenges of climate change through a lens that respects and elevates the deep and enduring wisdom of Oregon's Tribal Nations.

Sincerely,
Nicole Butler-Hooten