

Thank you Chair Kropf & members of the committee

I am here to speak in support of SB 926.

My name is Sam Drevo, and the Labor Day fires of 2020 turned my life upside down. My mom and I lost our homes and it heavily impacted my business. We have yet to rebuild in our community, we have been fighting for justice and compensation for our losses for over 4 years.

This bill says we matter. That fire survivors matter more than profits for shareholders of Oregon's largest utility.

The first call that came into Gates fire at 7:30pm was about a powerline ignited fire less than a ¼ mile from our house. While the fire department was busy putting that fire out, our neighbors witnessed other loud pops and bursts of light from transformers exploding.

The fire department dispatch started ringing off the hook as they became overwhelmed with spot fires. These ignitions happened during a wind storm and extreme drought conditions.

The Gates Fire department soon found themselves at Gates School where a powerline was knocked by a tree branch onto a chain link perimeter fence. The powerline energized the metal fence and sparks shot everywhere setting more spot fires. The incident command center for the Beachie Creek wildfire burned down, and dozens of wildland fire fighters ran for their lives.

The fire burned \$2M worth of wildfire fighting equipment to the ground and the majority of the school. Another powerline ignited a fire at Fisherman's Bend Campground, sending dozens more firefighters stationed there fleeing down river.

The power wouldn't be shut off for several more hours.

By 9:30pm there was a 400' fire on Potato Hill ½ mile from my mom's house.

We fled as darkness fell. We had our dog and the clothes on our backs. This was a traumatizing experience I will never forget, and one that comes back to me with every fire season and wind event.

During the next 12 hours, the wind storm fanned these fires into fire tornados that burned 50% of the structures in our community. I lost my business assets and my office, a rental home we had just renovated, and a historic home we had just raised onto a foundation.

My Mom lost her house in Gates which housed all of her and my most valuable worldly possessions.

Over my career, I had taken 15,000 35mm slides. I had Digital masters of my TV and film career. I had Olympic festival and world championship medals for kayaking & rafting vaporized. These were priceless to me.

What were the costs? Heavy and life changing.

I am a plaintiff in the class action against PacifiCorp. I had no idea of the tactics the lawyers from Stoel Rives would use to try to wear us down.

Leading up to the trial, they subjected us to intensive depositions and examination by a forensic psychologist. My mom and I were subjected to these exams for no good reason. These were re-traumatizing, and infuriating. PacifiCorp's attorneys used sensitive personal information against my mom, a 76 year old grandmother, during cross examination to try to claim her hurt and pain was a pre-existing condition.

This was an appalling display of unmitigated corporate greed.

And we are still waiting for them to pay for their gross negligence - and watching as they try to get out of it.

The trial proved that PacifiCorp caused and contributed to the losses in the Santiam Canyon.

Experts, witness testimony and the evidence showed that Pacificorp turned the power back **ON many times and** started more spot fires that night. The company's fires hindered emergency response and burned up not one, but two fire camps.

After the fire there were more utility trucks in the community post fire than emergency vehicles - 20:1. In the trip back we would come to find out Pacificorp was not only replacing lines **while the wildfire was still active (vs helping put fires out that their equipment started)**, but they were removing burned equipment and disposing of and destroying evidence.

During the trial it came to light that they also destroyed internal communications about their fire starts and destruction of evidence.

To say the least, PacifiCorp's actions and inaction before, during and after the Labor Day 2020 were negligent.

Oregon must find ways to hold any utility who harms Oregon and Oregonians in these ways to account.

SB 926 does so.

What language does this company speak? This is a multi-billion dollar monopoly that has paid billions of dollars to its parent. Its parent has hundreds of billions in free cash.

This is an entity that speaks the language of money.

While the company was found grossly negligent in court, their people declared they would do nothing different in the future.

They cited climate change as the problem and cause, all the while they burn coal and gas to provide power and shirk their promises on green energy.

The court also awarded punitive damages for their reckless conduct.

What has happened since?

Our power rates have almost doubled, and a narrative has been spun to further delay and politicize the jury's verdict.

In 2024, PacifiCorp posted a record gross revenue of over \$25 Billion with a net income of \$2.4 Billion. They are paying dividends to shareholders and deflecting and delaying its responsibility to Oregonians who it burned up. The utilities are here to serve Oregonians, not the other way around.

The time has come to stop glad-handing utilities. It's time to stop behaving like victims, or captives with Stockholm syndrome developing sympathy for our captives & abusers.

It's time for Green Energy advocates (OEC, Renewable NW, and Climate Solutions) to start holding these monopolists to account instead of scapegoating wildfire mitigation & utility fire survivors (or the threat of bankruptcy) for not developing & implementing better policies. Bankruptcy is a phantom menace here, and there is a world where wildfire mitigation plans become the gold standard in Oregon to REDUCE powerline fires, and utilities are held to a higher bar (by law) for meeting green energy targets.

I'll say it again- The utilities are here to serve Oregon not the other way around.

PacifiCorp has spent north of \$100M on attorneys to litigate & lose this case. Ratepayers should not be paying these costs.

Any claim that this bill is interfering with ongoing litigation is just plain offensive.

They shouldn't be able to go back to doing business as usual passing off costs to ratepayers, and shelling out dividends to investors while all of us continue to struggle to put our lives back together.

This bill would put Oregonians first **before** the corporation profiting from the disaster they created.

Pacificorp is responsible for paying for the damage they caused and the pain and suffering that was inflicted by their equipment, actions, and inactions.

Let's set a higher bar. With this bill the Oregon Legislature is sending a message of accountability, and hope to communities and people affected by these powerline fires.

Let's get this bill to the floor for a vote. Vote yes for SB 926.