

My name is Dr. Martin Donohoe. I am a physician, adjunct faculty in the Master of Public Health program at Portland State University, and author of a textbook in Public Health. I have published numerous peer-reviewed articles covering environmental health. Most important, I am single father to a delightful toddler. I am here on behalf of myself, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, and because I want a cleaner, healthier environment for my child and all children.

Oregon still gets one-third of its energy from burning coal, the largest source of air and carbon pollution in the U.S., the leading contributor to climate disruption, and a major public health threat.

The health consequences of burning coal include:

- Increased ground level ozone, which worsens lung and cardiovascular health.
- More air pollution, increasing the risk of asthma, heart attacks, strokes, and cancer. Air pollution, causes 200,000 premature deaths/yr in the U.S. and 6 million worldwide.
- Exposure to neurotoxic mercury, which impairs fetal and child brain development.
- Global warming, which causes 400,000 deaths and up to 5.5 million disability-adjusted life years lost per year worldwide (numbers that are expected to double by 2030), along with weather extremes involving severe, deadly and costly storms and record-breaking wildfires.

The coal cycle carries numerous other health risks, including exposure to coal dust and coal train diesel particulate matter, which can cause lung disease, heart attacks, strokes and cancer.

The dangers to life and health from a changing climate in the Northwest cannot be ignored. Air pollution leads to more emergency room visits, hospitalizations, missed work days, and higher health care costs for families, businesses, and the state. Our clean water supply is shrinking. Our smaller snowpack means less water for irrigation and disruptions in our rural economy and food supply.

Clean, renewable energy sources are clearly far better for our health and environment than any fossil fuels-- not just coal, but oil and natural gas, which carry their own, similar health and environmental risks.

The goals of the Coal to Clean Energy Transition Bill are supported by a large majority of Oregonians. The measure is financially sound, it will provide long-term, family-wage jobs, and it would literally decrease suffering and save lives.

Fossil fuels are a dying 19th Century technology with Dickensian effects on human health and the environment. Oregon needs an energy policy for the 21st century. Please pass this bill for our health, our communities, and all our children.

Thank you.

Martin Donohoe, MD, FACP

<http://www.publichealthandsocialjustice.org>

<http://www.phsj.org>

martindonohoe@phsj.org