



## Testimony in Support of HB 4036, Submitted to Senate Committee on Business and Transportation 2/17/16

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, representing more than 2,000 health professionals and health advocates in Oregon, strongly supports HB 4036, the Clean Energy and Coal Transition Act.

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 per year in the U.S. and seven 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. This bill, which ends our dependence on coal and doubles Oregon's Renewable Portfolio Standard to 50% by 2040, will bring more clean

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Additional provisions in the bill which increase access to solar power, including for low-income Oregonians, and support electric vehicle infrastructure are important steps toward a rapid transition to a more just and healthy energy system.

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

Submitted on behalf of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility,

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