

I testified before the committee on Monday, February 18th. Here is a written copy of my testimony.

---

My name is Nora Lehmann, and I live in Portland.

Since it is youth lobby day, I am here today to testify in support of HB2020 on behalf of children who are, as yet, too young to be here. I am here both selfishly, for my own beloved kids, Sally who is three, and Syd, who is just 15 months old, but also for all children, who are too young to understand what is at stake and what it will mean for their future.

As every parent knows, caring for children is such a mixture of joy and exhaustion and, for me, grief, as the knowledge of the onrushing climate crisis weighs heavily on my heart. What will I tell them, when they are old enough to understand? That we understood full well we were destroying the planet which sustains our lives, but barreled on regardless because dying out was easier and cheaper than changing?

I have heard as an argument against this bill, that because Oregon's carbon emissions are "minuscule" as a portion of overall global emissions that we shouldn't bother. This reasoning, for not doing what we know to be the right thing, the urgently necessary, already long overdue right thing, is the kind of excuse a child would give: "But everybody else isn't doing it, either!"

That is not how we raise our children, to use bad behavior by others as an excuse for our own. I am trying to teach Sally and Sydney to do the right thing, not the easy thing. To think of everyone in the group, not just themselves. To lead by example, and to be the change they wish to see in the world. HB2020 may not be a perfect bill, or the ultimate solution to the climate crisis, but it is a critically important beginning, and I hope this legislature will find the unity and courage to pass the strongest bill possible. In fact, I literally beg you — for my children, and grandchildren's sake — and, if not for them, then for your own.

Thank you.