

**Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**  
**Testimony given on February 4, 2020**

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Olsen, members of the committee: For the record, my name is Vernon Johnson and I live in Beaverton. I am a constituent of Senator Mark Hass and Representative Jeff Barker.

I first came to Salem to advocate for climate change legislation on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and I have been back many times since. That day was the second birthday of my two youngest grandchildren, twins Aaron and Annika.

It was also the day that I had just finished a short book titled *Creation* by E. O. Wilson. Dr. Wilson is Emeritus Professor of Harvard, a world renowned biologist and Pulitzer Prize winning author. In this book, Wilson states, "half the species of plants and animals on Earth could be either gone or at least fated for early extinction by the end of the century."

What hit me was that if Aaron and Annika live into their 90's they will be alive at the end of this century. What kind of a planet are we leaving for our grandchildren's generation.

Many say that the dire predictions by the scientific community are just scare tactics. Scientists are not prone to hyperbole. If anything, they are most often conservative in their predictions. Today we are seeing that the effects of climate change are occurring earlier than predicted and are more severe.

Will efforts to combat climate change come at no cost? Of course not. We all need to share the burden to hopefully avoid the worst effects of this coming environmental disaster.

Born in 1940, I am old enough to have been alive during World War II. My earliest memories are of the joyous celebrations at the end of that war. But I also remember yellow and black stickers on car windshields that were an instrument of gas rationing. Many commodities were rationed. For a young child sugar rationing meant no homemade cakes or cookies so that for breakfast you could have some sugar to put on your Corn Flakes or oatmeal. The point is that everyone contributed to combat a foreign enemy. Some gave a lot - some gave a little - but everyone contributed.

Our enemy today is ourselves, or rather, our lifestyle. Concerted action is needed to address this climate crisis. We need to look beyond what the cost might be in the next three years and look to how we can save our planet in 30 years. Unabated, the climate change predicted in 30 years will destroy our farms, our forests, and our economy. We cannot wait to take action at the legislative session next year. Time is running out. Please take action during this short legislative session and pass a strong SB 1530. Do it for our grandchildren.