

Dear Chairperson Holvey and House Rules Committee,

I am writing to express my support for HB 4167 and the need to declare a Climate Emergency.

I am a professor of Biology at Willamette University and have spent the last 25 years studying the ecology of the American West.

Over the course of my career I have seen first hand the devastating impacts of Climate Change. I've seen freshwater springs where I played as a child disappear as winter rainfall in the arid west has dwindled. I've seen my own research sites destroyed by wildfire, once extremely uncommon in the desert ecosystems I study. And right here in Salem we now have 20 fewer days of freezing weather than we did in the 1940's.

We are in a climate emergency!

As a scientist, I see that the evidence linking these changes to human activities is overwhelming. We have known since the 19th century that increasing carbon dioxide concentrations should cause warming of the Earth's climate. Since 1960 atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased by 25% - to levels not seen at any time in the last million years. During this same time, we have seen ever increasing average global temperatures, with the last five years being the warmest ever recorded.

I am not an economist, but my colleagues in the Economics Department tell me that the best way to have less of something is to tax it. My more fiscally conservative colleagues support market-based solutions such as cap and trade would be highly effective and promote business innovation while reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Sincerely,

Christopher Irwin Smith

Associate Professor

Department of Biology

Willamette University

Salem, OR 97301

ph: 503-370-6181

fax: 503-375-5425

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