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February 17, 2021

Good Evening Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hannah Sohl and I am the Executive Director at Rogue Climate, and also a resident of Talent.

Rogue Climate is a Climate Justice organization based in Southern Oregon and the south coast and our office in Phoenix was also destroyed by the Almeda fire this September.

While I appreciate this hearing, I want to share how challenging it is for community members to actually access it. The fact that this whole hearing isn't being interpreted in Spanish means that you won't get to hear the stories of many in southern Oregon who were most impacted and have been most left out of the recovery.

I appreciate the effort to have the outreach flyer in Spanish, and for the translation support available for testimony, but there are still significant barriers to access that we can't afford to continue repeating. The legislature needs to interpret these meetings into Spanish, with the testimony registration page in Spanish, and create meeting access and info pages that do not require full PDFs to understand. Local jurisdictions would benefit from funding to be able to do the same. It is great to see the City of Talent starting to provide translation of council meetings.

Since the fire, Rogue Climate, the Rogue Action Center, SoHealthE and many other partners have been focused on providing immediate mutual aid for survivors of the Almeda fire who lost their homes or living spaces and organizing for recovery that creates more equitable, diverse, and climate resilient communities, rather than a recovery where community members are priced out of being able to return by developers, speculators, and large landlords - which we are seeing now.

We responded the morning after the fire by coordinating local grassroots organizers who set up relief centers in Talent and Phoenix to receive and dispense food, water, electricity, and other essential supplies.

The two sites served over 1,000 households per week in September and October, and continue to serve up to 600 per week at the consolidated location in Phoenix. Many fire survivors are



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sleeping in cars or garages or tents or 6 people in a rented room or hotel (while also doing online schooling) because there is no affordable housing available.

In the short term, we need immediate investment in case management and mental health services. People are still struggling to access available resources.

But our most immediate need continues to be housing. We need the state's support to invest in affordable replacement housing. "The market" didn't solve our housing crisis before the fire and will not now solve the affordable housing crisis made worse by the fire. Affordable housing will require a combination of public policy and public funding and land acquisition.

We need to invest public dollars in affordable housing of various kinds — from cooperatively-owned manufactured home parks to subsidized apartments. We also need to make sure some of those models enable the new residents to acquire equity in the home or project.

We know that many of the households who lost manufactured homes or RVs were low-income residents with no or inadequate insurance. For example, one essential worker in our community received \$8K in insurance for his 1971 trailer and now is faced with needing to replace it with one that will cost well over \$50K.

The health and vibrancy of our region, and our families, depend on being able to house people back in their home towns and communities.

Climate change is here, and the Almeda fire is what it looks like. We cannot wait to transition off of fossil fuels and to 100% clean energy. We need the state's investment to do that in a way that helps the communities that were most impacted by this fire.

We urge members of this committee to support policies before you this legislative session that will help our communities prepare for the challenges of climate change. Policies like the Healthy Homes bill (HB 2842) which could ensure that as people find housing, they are spending less money on heating and cooling, have a refuge from increasingly bad outdoor air quality from future fires, while also helping to transition our state to clean energy and creating good local jobs in retrofitting and repairs. Policies like House Bill 2475 which will make energy more affordable and lower the energy burden for community members trying to get back on their feet after this disaster. And policies like House Bill 2995, which will help our region transition to 100% clean energy and away from fossil fuels.



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As housing is rebuilt, we need to ensure it is done in a way that is affordable, prepares our communities for future fires, and that the rebuild helps our communities transition to clean and renewable energy.

Hannah Sohl

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Sohl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and a long, sweeping tail.

Executive Director, Rogue Climate