

Friday, March 19th 2021

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SCR 17: An Environmental Justice Framework for Oregon. My name is Angela Asuncion, and I am a Filipina-Canadian MSc. Candidate in Rural Planning and Development in International Development Studies at the University of Guelph, Canada. My Honors Bachelors in Bio-Resource Management, majoring in Environmental Management, served as the impetus for my pursuits in intersectional environmentalism, planning, and international development. As an emerging transdisciplinary scholar, my expertise is characterized by my steadfast dedication to serving communities and ecosystems through research, policy influence, and advocacy. Specifically, my work is embedded in the co-creation of knowledge to strengthen socio-ecological systems in underserved Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities. My research and advocacy for social justice transcend beyond the confines of academia. I am a Toronto Coordinator for the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines, mobilizing political action concerning the human rights abuses that Canadian mining corporations are involved in within the Philippines and worldwide. I have taken action to apply my knowledge, research and writing skills as a volunteer for the Investigate PH initiative. Investigate PH is an international initiative holding independent investigations to the human rights violations in the Philippines. As a strong advocate for intersectional environmentalism, I am conscious and driven by the fact that societies worldwide are intrinsically interconnected; injustice for one means injustice for all. This worldview has become the foundation of my testimony supporting the SCR 17: An Environmental Justice Framework for Oregon.

I urge you to support SCR 17. I acknowledge that Oregon State Legislature needs to do much more to address the urgent issues of environmental and climate justice in a timely fashion. The first step is agreeing to a statement of principles that set the bar for future action. The proposed resolution follows a valuable tradition of passing resolutions; at times, we must take the first steps to right wrongs, i.e., the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

SCR 17 is crucial to me because it provides a legislative foundation that can be expanded beyond borders, mobilizing knowledge and climate action integral to the future of the people and our planet. I will embed aspects of this vital Legislature within my work and practice, integrating the work and research done within this bill to the climate action initiatives, community outreach, and political work that I am engaged in within my local region.

Submitting a testimony supporting SCR 17 means being a force to ignite change, connection and resiliency across our communities and ecosystems. During the wake of COVID-19, civil rights movements and the impacts of climate change have been felt worldwide; 2020-2021 has exposed the inherent limitations within our current systems and planetary boundaries. A pattern emerges within this intersectionality. Those in Black, Native American, Indigenous and People of Colour communities are increasingly more vulnerable to the impacts of pandemics and the climate crisis, with poverty, lack of access to infrastructure, and food insecurity exacerbated in both cases. However, in every crisis lies an opportunity. Profound lessons lie in this historical era-- an

opportunity to reinvent our current system of exponential growth and consumption to one focused on interconnectedness, degrowth, holistic living and socio-ecological justice. Looking forward, systems thinking, institutional transformations, and a framework of shared principles, exemplary of what is found within this bill, are critical to achieving a just, equitable and sustainable future for all. My hopes are that this bill will act as a catalyst in actualizing positive environmental and social change and empowerment in underserved Black, Native American, Indigenous and People of Colour communities.

I urge you to vote yes on SCR 17. As Oregon takes on the monumental challenge of redressing these impacts, there should be a clear indication from the Legislature that the needs of historically and disproportionately impacted communities will be centred every step of the way. We must improve the public health and well-being of all communities while directly tackling the climate crisis and environmental injustice.

Sincerely,

Angela Asuncion

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