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May 5, 2021

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Helm and Brock Smith and members of the House Energy and Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SCR 17: An Environmental Justice Framework for Oregon.

Rogue Climate is a climate justice organization with offices in Phoenix and Coos Bay, Oregon with a mission to empower Southern Oregon and South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, seniors, and communities of color, to win climate justice by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, and a healthy environment. Over the last 7 months, Rogue Climate, along with many local partners and volunteers, has been supporting families displaced by the Almeda fire.

We urge you to support SCR 17. We acknowledge that our State Legislature needs to do much more to address the urgent issues of environmental and climate justice in a timely fashion and that the first step is agreeing to a statement of principles that set the bar for future action.

This resolution recognizes that the lack of services and essential infrastructure and disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards faced by many communities in Oregon is a product of exclusion from and unequal access to decision-making processes. Oregonians need a shared statement of conviction that lays the foundation for future policy to address the needs of frontline communities who are Black, Native American, Indigenous and People of Color communities, essential workers, youth, low-income people and those who are most vulnerable in rural and urban communities.

Events such as the September 2020 wildfires disproportionately impacted historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities in many rural areas of our state. In the Rogue Valley, the majority of the people displaced by the Almeda Fire and having the hardest time securing support and housing are low-income, Latinx, and/or elderly. Every week Rogue Climate and other organizations in the Rogue Valley support hundreds of fire survivors to meet their most basic needs, like food, water, and a place to stay.



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In recognition of climate trends such as more intense fires, flood and energy system overloads, SCR 17 draws our attention to the need to repair communities in a way that addresses existing inequities. Communities that have been harmed by unjust and discriminatory siting of pollution, lack of access to public infrastructure, and exposure to other environmental hazards, are now finding themselves bearing the brunt of the impacts and costs of the climate crisis.

SCR 17 uplifts the expectation that Oregon will make reparative investments in impacted communities and direct state resources to ensure that policies and processes are focused on building systems for healthy food, renewable energy infrastructure, and good jobs with a family-sustaining wage and workforce services and skills training programs.

SCR 17 would help align the equity goals throughout the legislative and administrative branches of government to build a just, equitable, and resilient future for all Oregonians.

We 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 centered 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,  
Alessandra de la Torre  
Energy Justice Organizer, Rogue Climate