

# House Concurrent Resolution 203

Sponsored by Representatives ALONSO LEON, DEXTER, CAMPOS, BYNUM, RUIZ; Representatives NERON, PHAM, POWER, SANCHEZ, Senators FREDERICK, PATTERSON (Pre-session filed.)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Declares legislative intent to address risk to workers due to climate change impacts and climate hazards.

## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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2       Whereas Oregon workers are increasingly at risk of on-the-job injury, illness and death due to  
3 a changing climate and increased exposure to climate hazards, such as extreme cold and heat and  
4 wildfire smoke; and

5       Whereas climate hazards disproportionately impact outdoor frontline workers who are required  
6 to work in nonclimate-controlled environments; and

7       Whereas frontline workers are overwhelmingly from immigrant communities, low-income com-  
8 munities and communities of color that historically and presently experience the brunt of health,  
9 economic and ecological impacts because of these factors; and

10       Whereas the requirement that workers perform work duties in dangerous conditions due to a  
11 climate hazard contributes to health and financial inequities to frontline workers resulting in in-  
12 creased injury, illness and mortality, increased mental health stress, decreased economic security  
13 and lost wages; and

14       Whereas workers fear retaliation for speaking out against harmful working conditions and the  
15 risk of exposure to climate hazards such as extreme cold and heat and wildfire smoke; and

16       Whereas environmental and climate solutions must address structural socioeconomic inequalities  
17 and suffering built by a history of economic and social inequality, whether intentional or uninten-  
18 tional; and

19       Whereas exposure to climate hazards exacerbates underlying health, demographic and  
20 socioeconomic factors that result in disproportionate health impacts to low-income individuals,  
21 communities of color, immigrant groups, Indigenous peoples, children, pregnant women, older adults,  
22 vulnerable occupational groups, persons with disabilities and persons with preexisting or chronic  
23 medical conditions; and

24       Whereas the futures of essential workers, farmworkers and low-income and vulnerable rural and  
25 urban communities are at risk of irreparable harm from the consequences of climate change impacts,  
26 natural disasters and disruptions and public health and economic crises; and

27       Whereas climate change threatens business operations; and

28       Whereas labor protections are needed to protect the lives and livelihoods of workers in Oregon  
29 from exposure to accelerating climate hazards; and

30       Whereas the extreme heat wave that affected the Pacific Northwest during the summer months  
31 of 2021 resulted in at least three work-related deaths due to environmental heat exposure; now,

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 therefore,

2 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

3 That we, the members of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly, declare our intent to protect  
4 workers who are impacted by the increase in extreme weather conditions due to climate change; and  
5 be it further

6 Resolved, That the Legislative Assembly recognizes a climate hazard as an event, originating  
7 inside or outside of this state, that can harm human health and pose safety risks and that is caused  
8 by the disruption of physical, biological and ecological systems, including but not limited to  
9 wildfires, flooding and other natural disaster events that require evacuations, extreme cold and heat,  
10 poor air quality and vector-borne diseases; and be it further

11 Resolved, That the Legislative Assembly recognizes a climate-impacted worker as any worker  
12 who risks injury, illness or death due to exposure to a climate hazard while working outdoors or  
13 who works in an indoor environment that does not have adequate temperature and air filtration  
14 controls; and be it further

15 Resolved, That the Legislative Assembly recognizes an outdoor worker as any worker who per-  
16 forms more than 50 percent of their assigned work duties outside; and be it further

17 Resolved, That employers have a duty to furnish safe and healthful places of employment and,  
18 accordingly, should address climate hazard threats by stopping work when any of the following  
19 conditions exist:

20 (1) The geographical area in which the employer's work site is located is subject to a level 3  
21 evacuation warning;

22 (2) The geographical area in which the employer's work site is located is subject to a level 2  
23 evacuation warning and is within a two-mile radius of a geographical area that is subject to a level  
24 3 evacuation warning;

25 (3) The outside air temperature exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit;

26 (4) The outside air temperature is 15 degrees Fahrenheit or lower; or

27 (5) The air quality index value reaches 350 or higher; and be it further

28 Resolved, That workers have a right to safe working conditions and, on that basis, the Legisla-  
29 tive Assembly shall examine strategies to protect climate-impacted workers from exposure to climate  
30 hazards, including protections against retaliation for climate-impacted workers who refuse to work  
31 in conditions with a high risk of exposure to climate hazards; and be it further

32 Resolved, That the State of Oregon will make investments to ensure workers may receive pay  
33 protections during a period of work stoppage caused by a climate hazard or a period when a worker  
34 takes leave to avoid the risk of exposure to a climate hazard.

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