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On Behalf Of: Elders Climate Action-OR

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB2908

To: House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

From: John Weigant

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Subj: Testimony on HB 2908 to 2911

I am a former high school physics teacher, urban planner, and software development consultant.

Now a climate activist, I invite your attention to the future. These bills show obsolete thinking.

1. Among various legislative priorities, action to reduce Oregon's climate drivers deserves maximum attention, and maximum budget. Economic Development activities also make claims on the state budget which tend to increase climate change.
2. As a former physics teacher, I know that mass, energy, and momentum are conserved. That means there are limits to physical growth, which cannot exceed available mass and energy. I also know culture has "momentum," with a singularity (a sharp change in direction) in the triple events of 1776, when (1) We declared Independence, starting a new form of government of, by, and for the people; (2) James Watt installed his first rotary steam engine, starting a trend to use the fossil energy the sun had been storing for about 3 billion years, now found to warm the planet with waste and pollution; and (3) Adam Smith wrote The Wealth of Nations, an economic system based on the assumption of perpetual economic growth. Perpetual growth violates the conservation laws of physics.
3. Since 1776, American culture has increased its momentum (mass [of people] times their velocity) by economic forces. We are careening to a collision with the limits of the Earth. We must put brakes on economic development, which creates jobs, which attract people, which demand infrastructure for a decent life. Public money is a "force" that can change momentum. It should be used to bend momentum toward sustainability, not to accelerate more mass and energy.
4. Much of the population is not yet aware that the forces of economic growth must reverse, to pursue sustainability.
5. These 4 bills are highly political, and many people still believe that growth is a still a desired strategy. An appropriate response would minimize the amount of public funds allocated.
 - a. HB 2908 encourages EconDev projects. It should encourage Climate Resilient projects
 - b. HB 2909 supports visitors associations, whose purpose is typically to

promote travel. Until travel shifts from Internal Combustion Engines to Electric Vehicles, this is a misplaced priority

c. HB 2910 supports outdoor recreation. As a former mountain climber and skier, I love the outdoors, but most outdoor recreation is fossil energy-intensive. Not the best choice.

d. HB 2911 counteracts the impact of Covid-19. In fact, Covid-19 reduced fossil energy use, and was a positive force for the future. Surely there is a better way to spend state money that lowers the impact of fossil fuel use. How about more EV charging stations?

6. In summary, when allocating money under these bills, allocate as little as possible that increases travel and fossil fuel use.

7. While there are limits to quantity growth driven by the conservation laws, quality is more often determined by information content. Information grows exponentially, without limit. So focus your appropriations to make things better, not bigger, while remembering that capitalism is founded on the assumption of perpetual growth, which is not possible.

8. What I have said above is true, even if not popular. We must look ahead, not backward.