

Submitter: Gary Wallmark

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General
Government, and Veterans

Measure: HB2601

My name is Gary Wallmark. I am a Eugene resident and retired, career-long PERS member. My wife, Linda Wallmark, is a retired educator and also a retired PERS member. We are writing to urge you to support HB 2601, the Treasury Investment and Climate Protection Act.

The Oregon Treasury holds roughly \$10 Billion worth of public and private equity fossil fuel investments. Holding such investments is risky—fossil fuel investments over the past decade have not kept pace with non-fossil fuel investments in the market, and this gap will only increase over time. A fossil fuel intensive investment portfolio risks losing value as the country continues to electrify its infrastructure. This change is accelerating as we turn to green energy sources and further develop electric uses (as we see with the proliferation of EVs). This will leave Oregon “holding the bag” of stranded and diminished assets when the inevitable conversion to electrification occurs.

The Oregon Treasury recognizes that fossil fuel investments are becoming increasingly risky, and that Oregon needs to decarbonize its investments. On this point, we are in agreement. The Treasurer says that he has a plan to make a plan to decarbonize. That’s not good enough. We don’t know when this plan will be revealed; what it will contain; how long it will take to be fully implemented, whether it will be implemented at the full discretion of the Treasurer (or some different future Treasurer) or if it will require administrative or statutory changes.

While we wait on this uncertainty, the Treasury continues to invest in fossil fuels to the tune of additional hundreds of millions of dollars.

When you’re in a hole, the first thing you need to do is stop digging. Yet the digging continues. Clearly, it’s time to take away the shovel.

Oregon shouldn’t address this financial threat by continuing to invest as usual and delude itself into believing that the uncertain plan to make a plan will be timely in its inception or completion. HB 2601 provides a clear, immediate statutory plan that stops the digging now and lays out a workable process of decarbonization of our investments. This plan should be passed out of committee.

Gary and Linda Wallmark
Eugene