

Submitter: John Bateman  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB854

Thank you Chair Dembrow and members of the committee.

My name is John Bateman and I am a Junior at West Salem High School. I am here representing Our Future, a student statewide network focused on environmental action, speaking in support of SB-854, which would require place based climate education for grades K-12.

The climate education that I have received in my 12 years of school has been broad and unspecific. The surface level information that I've been given, by curriculum limited to science classes, doesn't do the climate crisis justice. I had learned enough to know that it was a problem, and that something needed to be done, but when I looked around at my school, my community, my country, and the world, it seemed like nothing truly meaningful was being done to address the issue. When my environmental club president at the time approached me about joining Our Future, I leapt on the opportunity to become involved in local climate activism.

As part of the Our Future Network, I have learned a great deal more about certain aspects of climate change, and I have been given an outlet to work at resolving the issues I have learned about. Before joining the network I had no idea of the impact that food waste has on climate change. I am now a project team lead for our Cafeteria Waste Reduction Committee, where we are about to roll out programs in schools all across the state promoting sustainable and green cafeteria procedures. The simple fact is that learning about climate issues inspired me to get involved to try to address those climate issues.

Nelson Mandela said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". This quote encapsulates why this bill is so important.

Ensuring that all Oregon students receive in depth climate education that is specific to their community, throughout their K-12 journey, will establish a statewide, climate conscious sentiment, inspire our students to get involved in a positive way in their schools and communities, and create awareness about pressing issues that are becoming more and more devastating.

If you take nothing else away from this testimony, take those words spoken by Nelson Mandela. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". The world needs changing, our state needs changing, and education is the path to get there. I urge you, members of the committee, support SB 854 for the sake of our students, our state, and the generations to come.

Thank you for your time.