

Submitter: Will Mowry
On Behalf Of: Our Future
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Hello Committee members,

My name is Will Mowry, and I am a sophomore at Bend Senior High School. I am one of the leaders of Bend High's environmental club, and I am also a Regional Leader for the organization Our Future. I want to tell you a little bit about how climate change has affected my life, and the changes I've seen in the world around me growing up.

When I was little, wildfire smoke was never something I noticed, simply because it wasn't there in the quantities it is present in today. Now, towards the end of every summer, there are weeks on end where it is unhealthy to go outside and to do the things I enjoy. The wildfires are increasing in size, severity, and frequency, and are affecting people in day-to-day life. Another aspect in which climate change has affected my life has to do with snowpack. I am an avid nordic skier, and race competitively with Mt. Bachelor Sports Education Foundation. The snowpack is lasting shorter and shorter durations as the globe warms, and I can see this every year in my sport. Some days in January it will feel like March, and we'll be forced to ski in short sleeves.

Climate change is a huge, pressing issue in my life. If we continue on the path we're on, these precious moments outdoors that I relish will be a thing of the past. My kids, their kids, and every single generation of future kids won't have the chance to see the beautiful things that I have witnessed in the outdoors or experience the experiences I have. I have been very fortunate to live a life so connected to the natural world, and ensuring that future generations will have these same opportunities is a crucial problem we are all facing. I have also been fortunate to attend a small magnet school at which matters like climate change were taught about, but I recognize that not all students have had this education.

Senate Bill 854 is important to me because it will educate students about the urgency of climate change, and help teach the future generation about this issue that is affecting them on a daily basis. I believe that educating students on this matter should begin as early as elementary school, when I began to learn about it. Growing up learning more and more about the issue has helped instill a sense of urgency in me, as well as making me realize I need to take action and stand up for our planet. Teaching students to value the natural world they live in will teach them to take measures to protect it, and to live a more sustainable life from a young age. You, as legislators, have the power to make significant changes in the lives of the future leaders of this country, as well as to protect it from harm and help repair it from the harm we have already caused. The climate crisis is an urgent matter that needs addressing now, and by supporting Senate Bill 854 you can teach future generations about this issue, providing them with the education and tools they need to make a difference. Thank you.

Kind Regards,
Will Mowry (he/him)
Sophomore, Bend Senior High School
Bend High Environmental Club Board Member
Our Future Regional Leader