

To: Committee: Education
From: Chloe Gilmore
Date: February 7th, 2023
Re: SB854

Good afternoon members of the Education Committee, and thank you for this opportunity to submit my written testimony. My name is Chloe Gilmore, and I am a junior currently attending Lincoln High School in Portland Public Schools. I am a leader of my school's Environmental Justice Club, Regional Leader for Our Future Oregon, and organizer with Portland Climate Strike who is passionate about enacting change on the legislative level. I was also on the Oregon Educators for Climate Education Student Advisory Committee which gave feedback on SB854 from students' perspectives.

From worsening wildfires to the days of extreme heat in the summer, air pollution, urban heat islands, and irregular weather patterns: the climate crisis already does and will continue to impact all Oregonians. My only formal education surrounding climate change was a single unit on the greenhouse effect in 7th grade that lasted two weeks. Besides this curriculum being incomprehensive and oversimplified, only learning about this one aspect of climate change and not about climate actions or solutions made me feel discouraged and hopeless.

This was until I decided to join my school's Environmental Justice Club and take the Environmental Justice Class where we learned about the complexities of these issues, the human impact of the climate crisis, and how we as students can take action. This completely reframed my perspective on the climate crisis from one of climate doomism to that of hope and collective action. The psychological effects of climate news on our youth is only worsening, and we need to combat this by teaching about solutions, activist resistance, and inspiring action.

SB854 is crucial because it outlines that students across Oregon receive an interdisciplinary education on the climate crisis. An interdisciplinary lens is important to understanding the issue from multiple perspectives in addition to the impacts of the climate crisis. This means studying impacts on both ecosystems and people, with an emphasis on how marginalized communities are affected. One provision that is crucial to me is section 2-i: "Educate students on natural resource management, economics, and labor" relating to "climate adaptation within the context of students' local communities." The integration of climate education into all subjects is necessary to equip students with the tools to create systemic changes to decrease our emissions and move towards a just future.

The climate crisis will impact all students' futures more and more as we move forward, so it is their right to know about the reality that they are facing. I urge representatives to listen to student voices when it comes to the climate crisis and listen when we say that we need mandated climate education in Oregon. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote YES on SB854. Thank you.