

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 854. My name is Bhavika Buddi and I am currently a senior at Westview High School. I am also an Oregon Fellow for Our Climate.

I wanted to share with you a little bit about my climate story. Growing up in Oregon, I spent a lot of my time outdoors, either exploring Portland's many beautiful trails, going down to the coast with family and friends, or simply walking and biking around my neighborhood. Being outside brings me peace; breathing in the fresh air and experiencing the natural world around me washes away all of my worries and doubts. But the same environment that has brought me so many good memories is already becoming unrecognizable. Every day, news of devastating hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters makes headlines. In my own community, I see extreme temperatures and an increase in forest fires that makes the air around me unbreathable. Every day, I'm mourning the loss of the world as I once knew it. I'm filled with feelings of anxiety and hopelessness because of the climate crisis and the lack of sufficient action toward solving it.

I believe climate education plays a big part in ensuring that younger generations still have hope for their futures. SB 854 ensures that youth can be exposed to the role humans play in causing climate change, how to adapt to the ever-changing world, and ways to take meaningful action in their communities. Beyond that, SB 854 also educates youth on different perspectives that are often overlooked, including those of indigenous people and other marginalized communities. As a student myself, I can really see the positive impacts of integrating climate education into the current curriculum. We are the generation that is affected most by climate change; it is our future that will cease to exist at the current rate of global warming. Our education systems should effectively prepare us for this reality, which is why it is essential to not only learn core subjects like math and science but also about important issues like climate change that are affecting us *right now*. Armed with the correct knowledge and resources, we have the power to protect and preserve our beautiful world.

As lawmakers, you have the ability to bring about positive change in Oregon's education system. SB 854 is a feasible and accessible bill, and it has the potential to bring hope and awareness to younger generations. I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of SB 854 and help protect our futures.

Thank you,
Bhavika Buddi