

March 8, 2023

Oregon House and Senate Education Committees
% Maia Daniel
900 Court Street Northeast
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for your efforts to provide the best educational experiences possible for Oregonians and particularly for Oregon students in SB 854.

Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition (EOC3) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to education, communication, adaptation, and solutions for a changing climate. We support a community of diverse Eastern Oregon residents who strive to learn and educate about living with a changing climate and working together to build a sustainable future.

We strongly support concepts that would integrate and accelerate place-based, hopeful, and solutions-focused, climate change education across all K-12 core subject areas.

Climate change today and into the future touches all aspects of our lives and next generations of Oregonians. Preparing our youth to understand these impacts, work with adults to develop solutions, and adapt to the changing climate is essential in coping with our changing environment. There is already compelling research that shows that youth anxiety about the future is on the rise and that this may be uniquely sensitive to changes in our global climate. Allowing young people to learn about climate resiliency with educators and community leaders across the core curriculum will help to mitigate long term mental health issues and provide a forum for youth to learn to address their concerns.

Educators, too, are currently stressed with their ever-changing curriculum and tight schedules. SB 854 will provide a unique approach by sharing of resources and time with many pathways and local direction to incorporate the concepts of climate change into the classroom. Many of those resources are currently available and are built to seamlessly integrate into existing curriculum. Climate education has already been demonstrated to be an effective interdisciplinary concept that advances science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), along with strong learning connections to language arts, social studies, arts, music, and health. By incorporating climate education into the curriculum students will be better prepared to understand complex problems in the future and have the skills and knowledge to develop cross-disciplined, balanced, and intergenerational solutions.

To bring about the transformations necessary for a sustainable future with resilient communities, widespread and consistent education about climate and sustainability is essential. With Oregon's vast diversity of places and ecosystems, climate change education can support regional solutions, position Oregon as a leader, and help communities of all ages build a vision for a safe, healthy, and happy future.

Please meet the opportunity of the moment and provide the support and resources for SB 854. The concepts as stated above are important to the future of citizens of all ages, our communities, and all Oregonians.

Thank you for considering this very timely issue.

Sincerely,

Jeff Blackwood, Chair
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