

## SB 854 Testimony

My name is Gemma Rossow, and I am a junior at Westview High School. I am a member of the Westview Dance Team and am a member of National Honor Society.

Due to the wildfires that spread across the West Coast in the summer of 2020 and 2021, heavy concentrations of smoke covered the light summer sky to a dark gray with hints of orange. The sun was heavily hazed over, creating a red hue. The smoke blanketed the sky for days, trapping in heat. Newscasters instructed people to stay indoors to prevent exposure to the smoke. Exposure at such high levels could lead to health complications.

As of the last few years, wildfires are becoming more and more common all across the West Coast, and many people are disregarding the increase in these fires. It is unfortunately becoming the new norm, and people have stopped questioning the frequency in which they are occurring. The wildfires are just one example of how climate change is affecting societies, yet not much has been done to make changes.

As a student attending Westview High School, my education about climate change has been very limited; to one singular unit in stem chemistry. In that one unit, I learned about carbon emissions, along with an alternative solution to oil and coal, supporting the use of nuclear energy.

While I do appreciate the one unit that I had that was focused around climate change, it was not enough to get an understanding of how many different effects climate change has on local communities, or how it affects the world as a whole. Learning about climate change is important because the future world depends on how we treat it now. While some effects of climate change are currently irreversible, preventing further damage to the earth is important if future generations want a healthy planet to live on.

Legislators currently have the ability to put laws in place to help prevent worsening climate change effects. By supporting and passing laws now, solutions to climate change related issues will be able to be developed before it is too late.

Kind regards,

Gemma Rossow

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