

Submitter: Jenoge Khatter
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Thank you, Chair Dembrow and Honorable members of the Committee,

My name is Jenoge Khatter, and I am a social studies specialist for Eugene School District 4J, a founding member of Oregon Educators for Climate Education, president of the Oregon Council for the Social Studies, and a delegate to the Oregon Education Association Representative Assembly. As a member of the Oregon Educators for Climate Education Steering Committee and an author of Senate Bill 854, I offer the following:

SB 854 requires standards to be developed so that climate change topics are connected to across subject areas in Oregon schools. How that happens is up to teachers and school districts. From the Department of Education and possibly ESDs, RENs, or other partners, some place-based models of what implementation can look like will be provided. The CAT Tax and Inflation Reduction Act offer some potential funding mechanisms. So does legislated funding to support atmospheric carbon reduction goals.

We need to make major strides to properly steward Oregon communities' land, water, and atmosphere for this generation and those to come. Factually educating our youth about the conditions affecting the resilience of our communities, and connecting youth to local jobs that allow them to lean into the opportunities of the future, is the right thing to do.

I have taught math and English language development for much of my 16 years as an educator. Modeling equations on relevant, real-world data is engaging and rigorous. Teaching English through concepts of interdependence, relationships, and natural systems fosters retention and application of vocabulary, syntax, and grammar. Connecting to climate change topics within the scope of what teachers already do is feasible. The Oregon Education Association, representing over 40,000 teachers, agrees, as evident from their written testimony.

There are about 200 nations on Earth, and by area Oregon is bigger than about half of them. We have incredibly diverse regions, communities, and ecosystems. Our efforts at place-based climate change education here can reverberate widely. I urge you to vote in the affirmative on Senate Bill 854.

Thank you for your time and consideration.