

Submitter: Laurie Dougherty
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

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

My name is Laurie Dougherty. I live in Salem. I am writing in support of SB 854 which requires each Oregon school district to establish a K-12 instructional program on climate change.

Here in Oregon, as around the world, young people are calling on all of us to protect their future from the ravages of climate change. Climate change threatens lives and livelihoods, health and homes, as well as the natural systems that support food production, forests, clean water, and wildlife.

Education is key to understanding these threats and to finding and implementing solutions – the policies, practices and technologies that can slow the rise of global temperatures and enable adaptation to unavoidable climate change impacts. Knowing what can be done to improve the future is the foundation of hope.

As a longtime activist and policy advocate for climate justice, I have studied, researched, and written about climate change and its impacts. I pieced together my own education about climate change out of a curiosity that evolved into commitment the more I understood. I learned - and still learn - about climate change and climate policy through adult education classes, conferences, lectures, and extensive reading.

However, this piecemeal process is not sufficient to the scale of the need for an informed and engaged society, competent to confront the climate crisis and to develop and implement solutions. SB 854 will ensure that all Oregon students have a coherent way to gain the information and to build the capacity they need to grapple with the serious and urgent implications of climate change.

As an older person, I am heartened by the youth climate movement and well aware that the young people growing up today will live into a future that I will not see. It is incumbent on all of us to enable them to meet that future with understanding and hope. I urge you to support SB 854.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Laurie Dougherty

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