

Submitter: Theodora Tsongas
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee, I am Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist. I am a member of the Healthy Climate Action Team of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Climate and Health Committee of the American Public Health Association. I am submitting this testimony to oppose SB 854 unless amended.

I support the development and implementation of a climate change curriculum for K-12 students in public schools in Oregon, but I am greatly concerned about the very real potential for the content of that curriculum to be subverted by industry driven influence, in particular by fossil fuel industry and nuclear industry advocacy. The language in sections 2(4)(a) and 2(4)(c) must be amended by striking the words "and other interested stakeholders" in both sections in order for the Oregon Department of Education and K-12 schools are independent from industry propaganda and misinformation.

Furthermore, the Department of Environmental Quality is not an educational institution and should not have review authority over the content of the curriculum simply because its funding comes largely from industry fees, and could be unconsciously biased. Industry and government funded inputs can result in misinformation and propaganda built into what should be science-based, factual, independent and free of undue influence. There are reputable non-profit scientific organizations that have developed K-12 curricula on climate change that can be useful in avoiding pitfalls such as The National Center for Science Education and the Environment Section of the American Public Health Association .

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.