

Submitter: Ruth Dallas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB870

Dear members of the Legislature,

My name is Ruth Dallas I live in Gaston Oregon. I write to you today to support three bills: SB 868, 869, and 870 that improve our states housing and building resilience to the effects of climate change. Humans are unfortunately not very good at looking at future risks and taking steps to avoid them. But as we see climate change with our own eyes it is no longer something we can ignore. These three bills will help Oregonians deal with the now frequent, dangerous climate events of wildfire smoke, excessive heat, and cold etc. As a community health nurse part of my work entailed visiting new mothers and their babies and fragile elders in their homes. What I often saw was tragic. In winter I saw low income mothers bundled up in one room of the house trying to keep themselves and their babies warm. They lived in homes, apartments and trailers that were poorly insulated with cold seeping in around old windows and doors and through poorly insulated walls. They often could not afford to run central heating and instead relied on dangerous portable heaters. I visited elderly in the same situation and even more dangerous in summer when temperatures were over 90 in homes with no air conditioning. They used portable fans that mostly just moved around hot air. Few were capable of getting to cooling stations due to lack of transportation or disabilities. During many weeks of smoke filled air these people had no way to escape the smoke that seeped into their homes. Smoke that is especially dangerous for the lungs of young and old. For some of us these weather events are distressing but less dangerous as we live well built homes with good insulation, tight windows and doors and air conditioning, but for low income people these are not options they can afford or that are offered in lower cost apartments. It is our moral obligation to ensure that our children and elders are protected from the harms of climate change. As I use the phrase low income I fear some legislators will imagine these people to be lazy, shiftless sorts who should work harder to improve their lives. But this is far from the case. The people I visited were the people we all depend on. They were the people who work in agriculture and food processing, the maids that clean our hotel rooms, the nursing assistants who care for us in hospitals and nursing homes, they were security guards and child care workers, waitresses and cooks and so many others who we see everyday and who do jobs that are necessary but grossly underpaid. So many work harder than I ever have as a nurse. Right now the poor suffer the most from the severe heat and cold events and the air pollution that is more and more common but soon the situation will be much worse and even those of us in well built homes and offices will suffer more too. It is past time to take action both to reduce the greenhouse gases that are causing our dangerous climate and to prepare for the inevitable future events that will be much

worse. I hope all Oregon legislators who work so hard to help Oregonians will see the necessity of these bills to begin the process of improving our safety and the safety of the vulnerable in our communities.

Thank you for reading my testimony,  
Ruth Dallas