

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Bhavika Buddi and I am currently a senior at Westview High School. I am also an Oregon Fellow for Our Climate.

Growing up in Oregon, I spent a lot of my time outdoors, either exploring Portland's many beautiful trails, going down to the coast with family and friends, or simply walking and biking around my neighborhood. But the same environment that has brought me so many good memories is already becoming unrecognizable. Every day, news of devastating hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters makes headlines. In my own community, I see extreme temperatures and an increase in forest fires that makes the air around me unbreathable. Homes and buildings are our first line of defense against these negative impacts of climate change. It's extremely important to invest in buildings that are both efficient and resilient. Currently, buildings are responsible for 34% of Oregon's total climate emissions due to fossil fuels used in electricity, heating, and cooking. We have a responsibility to focus on reducing these emissions by transitioning to cleaner, energy-efficient buildings. SB 868, 869, 870, and 871 will help us achieve this.

These bills also ensure that energy is more affordable in Oregon. More efficient homes and buildings can reduce both construction and operation costs, which is especially important to people of color and low-income households. These communities are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of climate change and spend up to three times as much on energy because they are more likely to live in older, less efficient buildings. We must focus on constructing buildings efficiently from the start, and also remove barriers so that people of all backgrounds can benefit from cheaper and more efficient energy and protection from growing climate harms.

As lawmakers, you have the ability to bring about positive change in our communities. These bills are a critical step in reducing our carbon emissions, while also achieving more affordable energy and housing and protecting our health. I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of SB 868, 869, 870, and 871.

Thank you,
Bhavika Buddi