



March 22, 2023

To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
Re: Support for HB 2990

Dear Chair Marsh, Co-chairs Levy, members of the Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment,

Thank you very much for having me and for the opportunity to support HB 2990 and the -1 Amendment.

My name is Kaleb Lay and I'm a fifth-generation Union County resident as well as an organizer with Oregon Rural Action. ORA is a 501(c)(3) grassroots, diverse, and community-led organization working in rural Eastern Oregon to promote social justice, agricultural and economic sustainability, and the stewardship of the region's land, air, and water.

I like to say that Eastern Oregon is a lot like Western Oregon, only it rains a lot less and our driveways tend to be a bit longer. And that changes the way we live. The grocery store, the gas station, the hospital, schools, police and firefighters – they all tend to be a bit farther away. The winters get colder, the summers get drier, and our agricultural and natural resource-based communities continue to bear the brunt year by year as our State faces increased threats from wildfire, drought, and extreme weather events brought on by climate change.

To put it plainly: we have to be resilient. Resilience isn't just a virtue in rural Oregon, it's a necessity. Our communities are small and tightly knit, and we need resources devoted to keeping them healthy. When disaster strikes, help can take much longer to arrive, so we have to rely on the tools we have at hand to help ourselves.

These Community Resilience Hubs would help us do all those things. Not only would we be able to build community-focused spaces dedicated to strengthening the wellbeing of our increasingly diverse towns and neighborhoods, but we would also have a place where anyone could go in the event of a disaster where they know the air is clean, the lights are on, and they are safe. We urge you to support this bill to help us build a more resilient Oregon.

Sincerely,

Kaleb Lay



La Grande, Oregon