



Oregon Just Transition Alliance

March 22, 2023

To: Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Levy, and members of the committee

Re: House Bill 2990 – Community Resilience Hubs

Thank you Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Levy, and members of the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Joel Iboa, I live in Eugene, and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Just Transition Alliance, a movement of communities facing environmental racism, climate change, and economic exploitation. I am here today in support of House Bill 2990, with the adoption of the -1 amendment, creating community-focused spaces and services all across Oregon through Community Resilience Hubs. This bill supports the creation of community-designed and operated centers that will help neighbors across Oregon find the safety and services they need before, during and after a wildfire, heat wave, or climate disaster strikes.

My uncle Lionso was one of the many people who lost his home during the 2020 Labor day Alameda fire. He continued to work in the pear orchards while the sky burned red. For a man in his 60s, the combination of working in smoke, losing his home, and contracting COVID was too much. He, his children, and grandchildren could have used a community resilience center before and after these events. And, I know that our communities need support year-round, in good times and bad.

We believe that no matter where we live or work, how much money we make, or our background, every Oregonian deserves a healthy, affordable, resilient home. As leaders and organizations representing frontline communities – Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities,

and people in rural areas– we see our neighbors disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. We need locally responsive, nimble solutions as our communities continue to bear the brunt of more extreme weather, wildfires, and climate disasters.

Resilience hubs and networks are designed by and for the communities they serve. This means in some areas they may offer a cool place during extreme heat, while others may provide emergency beds during a wildfire evacuation, mental health services, or warmth and safety during power outages from freezing weather. Each community will have the opportunity to design the programming and support that they need most.

In practice local governments, state partners and community groups like those represented by OJTA will collaborate to include current gathering places – such as county fairgrounds – are eligible to receive community resilience hub funds. In many parts of the state, schools, places of worship, and fairgrounds already provide support and services to the community in times of need, and they are trusted partners in community-led efforts.

This Session, we have an opportunity to help make communities in every corner of the state more resilient. Amended with the -1 amendment, House Bill 2990 will create the resources and connections Oregonians need. What we invest in today will build stronger communities tomorrow. And stronger communities can make the difference between surviving and thriving.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2990 and I urge you to move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Joel Iboa
Executive Director
Oregon Just Transition Alliance