



Date: March 21, 2023,
To House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2990 Community Resilience Hubs

Dear Chair Marsh, Co-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Meet Panchal and I am the Statewide Environmental Justice Projects Manager at Beyond Toxics. On behalf of Beyond Toxics, a state-wide environmental justice nonprofit, and thousands of our supporters across the state, we are writing to express our strong support for HB 2990.

Climate change is the most pressing issue of our time. Due to a history of marginalization and disinvestment, people of color, immigrants, refugees, and lower-income populations experience increased exposure and sensitivity to climate hazards and a reduced capacity to adapt. Resilience Hubs will fight climate inequities by shifting power to neighborhoods and residents, providing opportunities to address root causes of disproportionate exposure and sensitivity to climate impacts, and enhancing communities' capacity to adapt. With HB 2990, we can create a grant program through the Office of Resilience and Emergency Management that will go directly to communities to build and implement Community Resilience Hubs and networks.

Community Resilience hubs are especially important for isolated, rural communities that do not have access to resiliency resources after a disaster. There is a need to establish sites that empower communities to strengthen their cohesion, resilience, and self-sufficiency. This can be achieved by investing in facilities that offer critical community services during emergencies (e.g. backup power, telecommunications, medical supplies, shelter from the weather, and food and water rations). Ideally, local communities have a sense of ownership over resilience hubs and frequently use them during both normal and emergency periods.

A great example of effective [Resilience Hubs is in Puerto Rico](#). Hurricane Fiona inundated the island and left all residents without electricity. The hurricane deluged the island with upwards of 30 inches of rain within 24 hours, the community struggled with floods, lack of access to clean drinking water, and power outages.¹ Mercy Corps supplied 17 [Resilience Hubs](#) with solar energy, potable water storage, communication systems, and emergency kits. These Resilience Hubs were prepared to respond in any disaster and can support approximately 2,000 people in each community. We need Resilience Hubs in Oregon to address the risk and vulnerabilities amongst communities as we would continue to face temperature increases (both day and night) and the

¹ <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/resilience-hubs-puerto-rico-vital>

frequency of high-heat days. There would be an increased incidence of drought as well as increased wildfire frequency and intensity.

We urge you to vote Yes on HB 2990 to invest in building stronger communities and create the resources and connections to make it easier for Oregonians next time a disaster strikes. Stronger communities can make the difference between surviving and thriving.

Sincerely,
Meet Panchal
Statewide Environmental Justice Projects Manager
Beyond Toxics.