

Submitter: Nicholas McCullar  
On Behalf Of: Personal testimony  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure: HB2990

Oregon House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment,

I am writing in support of HB2990 based on my professional, educational, and volunteer experiences. My testimony is not on behalf of any organization with which I am affiliated.

Part of my job as a civil engineer has been to study the resilience of our cities' infrastructure to sudden natural disasters like earthquakes and long term stresses from climate change. The buildings used by community centers, schools, faith communities, sports organizations, neighborhood businesses, and other groups make up a social infrastructure that is at least as important to community resilience as the public infrastructure that connects them. Funding for infrastructure resilience will go to waste if there aren't any community organizations with the resilience to convert infrastructure services into social services.

I have been studying Emergency Management and Community Resilience at Portland State University. I have learned about the concept of resilience hubs emerging from the experience of communities post-disaster. In emergencies people turn to familiar and trusted organizations, and that trust needs to be built up before disasters by providing valuable services or experiences. It makes much more sense for the government to support emergency preparedness at organizations that already have well developed relationships with their communities, rather than try to have emergency service agencies build community outreach programs from the ground up. A wide range of activities can support community emergency preparedness, such as hosting potluck meals, organizing local running or walking events, or collecting litter. These activities also have immediate benefits such as preventing crime, and improving mental health.

I volunteer with Portland's Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) program. I had the opportunity to work as a NET volunteer at my local community center when it served as a cold weather shelter this winter. I have also worked with our community center to host a cache of emergency equipment and supplies for our team. Our community center recognizes that it is a natural gathering place for neighborhood residents after a disaster or during a heat wave, but doesn't have the funding to make rapid progress in emergency preparedness. Our community center would be very likely to apply for grant funding under HB2990 for seismic evaluation and retrofit, HVAC improvements, sheltering supplies, staff and community training programs, and to add disaster preparedness content to other community building activities they already

fund.

In my opinion, funding resilience hubs will be a good investment to strengthen Oregon's communities and protect its people from disasters.

Sincerely,

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