

Date: March 24th, 2023

To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Re: Support for HB 2990 Community Resilience Hubs

Dear Chair Marsh, Co-Chairs, and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment,

My name is David De La Torre and I live in Eugene, OR and I am writing on behalf of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. Guided by the values and expertise of healthcare and public health, Oregon PSR works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival. Our vision for a just transition to a healthier climate means that communities who are disproportionately impacted by disasters and climate disruption also have the support before an emergency occurs. Just as health outcomes are impacted by social determinants, we understand that “natural” disasters are also impacted by social factors. Many communities are already experiencing acute impacts of climate disruptions and pandemics and are doing so within the context of societal injustices and structural inequities. These factors undermine the health of communities through exclusion from resources and adequate support.

Oregon PSR supports HB 2990 to 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.

We support Community Resilience Hubs because we are very concerned about the impacts of climate disasters such as wildfires, heatwaves, and earthquakes. We understand that social and community support are critical social determinants of health and when people have the support that they need their health and wellbeing are dramatically improved. What we have here is an opportunity to increase resilience and connectivity to communities across Oregon who are dealing with the threat of climate disruption.

For many low Income, BIPOC, and Environmental Justice (EJ) communities this could be lifesaving. We think of the families in Northwest Portland where 90% of liquified fuel in Oregon is stored in the Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub. A 2020 study from Multnomah County found that the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake would result in possible release of materials stored in tanks that is equivalent to the size of the largest oil spill in the country’s history in the Gulf of Mexico. If communities have

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increased access to resources, they would also have the opportunity to get support from neighbors and connect faster and more effectively with crucial services during these events.

I urge you to vote Yes on HB 2990 to invest in building healthier communities and create the resources and connections to make it easier for Oregonians the next time disaster strikes. Stronger community support systems can make the difference in health outcomes.



**David De La Torre**  
**Healthy Climate Program Director**  
**Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility**

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