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On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General
Government, and Veterans

Measure: HB4083

I support the COAL Act in moving Oregon investments out of dirty coal. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 4083.

Coal is more expensive than renewable energy. America is a capitalist country, and we should be smart capitalists when it comes to investing state funds. Investing in fossil fuels is like investing in the world's largest horse herd, after Henry Ford invented the car.

Yesterday's Guardian newspaper states that, The EU "plans to use 80% less fossil fuels in the energy sector by 2040 than it did in 2021."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/06/eu-lays-out-plan-to-cut-greenhouse-emissions-by-90-by-2040>

America is already paying extra for fossil fuels. According to the International Monetary Fund, which is not a liberal, green organization, in 2022, global direct and indirect subsidies for fossil fuels amounted to seven trillion dollars.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/climate-change/energy-subsidies>

We pay extra for fossil fuels in the global climate weirdness that makes seasonal temperatures and precipitation unpredictable. This unpredictability lowers Oregon's agricultural yields. In Portland, I just saw cherry trees blossoming in January. January cherry blossoms do not bear fruit. These trees may bear lighter crops, if they manage to bloom again. Using fossil fuels costs us extra money at the market.

We pay extra for fossil fuels in climate disasters. In 2023, the US broke its annual record of billion-dollar disasters by August. Climate change makes these disasters worse. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/dec/29/world-will-look-back-at-2023-as-year-humanity-exposed-its-inability-to-tackle-climate-crisis>

We pay extra for fossil fuels in bad health. My father died from congestive heart failure. Part of that was smoking, but he quit smoking decades before he died. Part of it was air pollution.

Coal damages our environment. It is impossible to have a healthy body without a healthy environment. Coal increases health impacts such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, kidney disease, mental health problems, adverse birth outcomes, and impaired child development. Coal pollution impacts vulnerable

populations disproportionately.

It's time to stop making short sighted investments. Let's be smart capitalists and invest in renewable energy. Since California began removing coal from its CalPers portfolio, it has gained an estimated \$598 million in returns. Oregon, on the other hand, has foregone \$340 million in returns, according to an analysis by Divest Oregon.

The COAL Act will direct the Treasury to:

- o Phase out publicly traded investments in coal
- o Halt new investments in coal
- o Report on the phase out of coal

There is legislative precedent for the COAL Act in the Sudan Bill, passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2005. In that case, the Treasury was directed to withdraw funds from companies invested in Sudan, which they did, totaling over \$300 million in 2008–2014. This legislative directive was followed in such a way that the Treasury could maintain its fiduciary responsibility.

The COAL Act, HB 4083 requires no funding. The COAL Act will improve Oregon's fiscal performance, as witnessed by its coal investments' \$340 million underperformance in the past decade in publicly traded investments.

Investing in coal is obsolete. The proven assets of fossil fuel companies will become stranded assets, as investment moves to cleaner, healthier, more affordable renewable energy. The longer the Oregon treasury waits to sell coal, the more money we lose.