

Submitter: Paul Rippey  
On Behalf Of: Self  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3119

I'm Paul Rippey, and I live in St. Johns neighborhood of Portland and I'm writing in opposition to HB 3119.

In 1991 I read "The End of Nature" by Bill McKibben, which described in scientific detail the cost of CO2 emissions and the rapid destruction of the natural world due to resource extraction, industrialization and consumerism.

I naively thought that there would be a rapid reaction from decision makers to this existential threat, something on the line of FDR's Day of Infamy speech. In fact, there was no reaction at all. Oh, from time to time people like Al Gore spoke up, but there has never been any response that is in any way commensurate with the crisis. In fact, climate change was essentially absent from the last national presidential campaign. Some young people I know are despondent about their future - many refuse to have children because they don't want to bring them into the environmental catastrophe that they anticipate - rightly - during their lifetimes.

At every decision point concerning the destruction of the natural world, when we have to "balance business interests" with health, nature, livability - business interests win. Of course they do: business has more money for lobbyists than do birds, insects, trees, or our unborn children. Today during the oral testimony we all heard the arguments for waiting. "We aren't ready." "We need to delay". "Failure to pass the bill will jeopardize industry". "Hurt business. Cost jobs". "It will take years". I am sympathetic to those who see their businesses having to adapt to new regulations. I don't like it that we have created a nation that depends on importing huge quantities of manufactured goods from overseas to satisfy desires created by advertising. I hate it that we have conflated "the economy" with "quality of life".

But I'm not convinced by the arguments of the businesses who spoke today. Restrictions on transportation emissions are not the end of the world as we know it even for the people most affected, and we have a chance to do the right thing for our health and our quality of life.

Here's a personal story: My wife and I moved to St. Johns in Portland in 1997. There is a daily parade of trucks from the Port of Portland that runs through our neighborhood. We have one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Portland, and we have the worst air of Portland. My wife - a healthy, active woman in her seventies - developed asthma a couple of years after we moved here, and now needs an inhaler.

Is this a result of diesel pollution? We can't prove that, but we believe it. All the data show that we have to choose between the trucking industry on one side and human health on the other.

I hate it that you have to make choices like this. It's not your fault that you face such a dilemma. But in fact it is your decision and I ask you to support the health of my family and my neighbors, stop kicking the can of reduced emissions down the road, and please do not advance HB 3119.