



*From the Desk of*  
*Ms. A'Jay M. Scipio*

February 3, 2025

To: House Committee on Energy and Environment

Subject: Support for Resilience Hubs and Networks

Dear Chair Lively, Vice–Chair Gamba, Vice–Chair Bobby Levy, and Members of the House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment:

My name is A'Jay Scipio, and I lived in Portland, Oregon from 2018 until April of 2024, and continue to actively serve the Portland community through my work with several civic organizations, one of which is Sunstone Way, formerly Allgood Northwest. I am writing because my priority while serving in Oregon was those who lived “in the margins— “whose lives had taken twists and turns that placed them in vulnerable positions which makes them disproportionately less likely to be able to access the resources necessary to prepare for, survive, and/or recover from disaster/crisis.

I support HB 3170 to provide an additional \$10 million in funding for Resilience Hubs and Networks. Extreme weather and wildfires continue to hurt Oregonians, and we must ensure all communities have access to the resources and networks they need to thrive, not just survive.

I support HB 3170 and the continued funding of Resilience Hubs and Networks because:

1. During my tenure as the Program Manager of a food program in NE Portland during wildfires in 2020 and 2021, we delivered over 4,500 pounds of food and supplies to relief sites:

. The number of elderly, disabled, and young children displaced by the fires were disheartening. The fact that most of these families were uninsured, unhoused (homeless), or transient—got caught between destinations and didn't have the resources to get to safety were staggering.

a. None of the areas we delivered to were mentioned on the local news. They were further away from where most of the “mainstream media” reported about and their locations weren't as easily accessible to trucks, vans, or other large vehicles—therefore, more effort was necessary to provide any comfort, resources, and support to these families.

b. While MANY homes, businesses, and lives were saved because the community came together to assist one another—Young and old alike digging fire lines, folks LITERALLY connecting garden hoses

together to create make shift fire hoses to put out brush fires; pooling their limited resources to ensure their neighbors, strangers, and broader community had enough to survive in shelters until it was safe to return to what was left of their homes—or figure out where to lay their heads next.

c. What I noted in both situations was after the proverbial smoke cleared, more than 70% of those impacted in rural areas we served didn't have the resources or training to even attempt the process of rebuilding their lives—much less thinking about what resiliency could look like. We could give them food, but where would they take it? How would they prepare it? What was next?

Expanding Resilience Hubs and Networks will enable organizations that serve the most vulnerable Oregonians to provide critical programming to ensure access to services that will prepare disadvantaged communities, houseless families and individuals, those traveling through Oregon when disaster strikes, and those who don't live in areas where services are readily available, the opportunity to be prepared, connected, and safe in the event of extreme weather, wildfires, floods, and other natural disasters. My 35+ years of experience working with vulnerable populations has taught me that taking the time and effort to recognize the needs of the FUTURE of those in crisis, not just their immediate situations, are the highest forms of dignity and respect. At the very LEAST, that's what ALL Oregonians deserve, right?

So far, Resilience Hubs and Networks have invested \$10 million in locally-driven, community-led efforts to prepare us for disaster. During the last grant cycle, the state received over 700 applications and was only able to fund 69 of them, demonstrating the clear need for continued funding for Resilience Hubs and Networks.

These grants helped communities repair buildings that are emergency shelters, purchase satellite phones, generators, solar generators, water purification systems, and emergency vehicles, and financed staff positions like nurses and outreach staff. These investments will save lives, help first responders, speed recovery, and benefit the communities that are hit first and worst by extreme weather, wildfires, and other natural disasters.

I urge you to support HB 3170 so we can continue building strong Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Ms. A'Jay Scipio

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A'Jay Scipio', written in a cursive style.

Portland, Oregon, *formerly*