

Dear Education Committee Members and Oregon Legislators,

My name is Rachel Warner. I am from Oregon City and graduated from Oregon City High School in 2023. I am currently a sophomore at Columbia University studying History and Environmental Biology, and I am speaking here in support of House Bill 3365.

Growing up in Oregon City all my life, I was surrounded by the beauty of natural landscapes from a young age. I grew up near multiple farms and forests, but the diverse ecosystems I once loved were continuously threatened by wildfires and heat waves that reached unprecedented frequencies and intensities. In particular, I was a sophomore in high school in 2020 when the Labor Day fires forced my family and surrounding neighborhoods to evacuate our homes. The smoke and air quality reached dangerous levels, and I felt deep fear and worry for myself, my family, and my community. Despite my anxieties, there were few opportunities at my school to learn about the role of climate change in such a terrifying event.

Wildfires, such as those in 2020, are projected to persist, as dry and warm conditions are exacerbated by climate change. Youth will continue to witness these events, and our generation is inheriting this climate crisis and must develop sustainable solutions in the present and future. As a current college student, I realize now how climate education could have equipped me with the knowledge needed to create a sustainable future. Now, we have the opportunity to give students this education through House Bill 3365.

To prepare students for a climate resilient future, House Bill 3365 must be passed. This bill expands climate-resilience instruction across all K-12 core subject areas. The interdisciplinary approach to climate education will allow students to see how the environment and sustainability manifests in art, science, math, and social sciences among other subjects. This education will give students across grades the knowledge needed to make sustainable and climate-conscious decisions that are crucial to combating climate change.

Thank you for your commitment to Oregon's students and environment. For both youth and the environment, I urge you to vote in favor of House Bill 3365 to provide comprehensive climate-change education in Oregon schools.

Sincerely,
Rachel Warner