

Re: HB 3365 – Directs the State Board of Education to include an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability and climate change across all subjects – SUPPORT

Hello Chair Representative Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson and Vice-Chair McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB3365. My name is Tana Shepard. I am a K-12 Climate, Energy and Conservation Teacher in Eugene. I am a founding member of Oregon Educators for Climate Education (OECE), and have been involved in the creation of the bill.

I often hear folx say elementary students are too young to learn about climate change, that "it's too scary" and "we should not burden them". However, I have spent most of my teaching career in elementary classrooms, and I know that K-5 grade students are the perfect age to understand they live on a planet, all living things are connected, and some changes are being accelerated due to human impacts. Getting students outside regularly in school gardens, with nature based field trips and especially outdoor school, helps them begin to fall in love with our planet and treat her like a family member. There's nothing like the glow in the cheeks of an excited student discovering something they've never experienced before outdoors! When students are exposed to locally relevant and right now topics, it engages them to read, write, and have discussions about it.

Through a standards approach, teachers can effectively integrate the topic of climate change in age appropriate ways into the content they are already required to teach. Given standards alignment and resources to weave the topic of climate change into the regular curriculum, teachers can help formalize and normalize the topic across subject areas. A goal of HB3365 is for even the youngest of our learners to have the opportunity to learn about how our planet is changing and ways they can act.

A place based educational approach guided by standards ensures teachers in all reaches of the state have an entry point to teach about climate change. Across our state we are unified in drought and forest fire stories. No one is unaffected. When young students develop a deep connection to the place they live, an opportunity to learn about adaptations needed, as well as think in solutionary ways, they will feel empowered to take action and develop resilience for their futures and the futures of their communities.

HB3365 ensures that Oregon state educational standards address climate change, its effects on the Pacific Northwest, and ways to understand, innovate, and adapt for our future through mitigation, preparedness and resilience. I strongly urge you to vote for House Bill 3365 on behalf of our youth and the future of our beautiful

state, Oregon. Thank you, again, for this opportunity.