



Community for Earth, First Unitarian Portland

Dear Chair Meek, Vice-Chair McLain and Committee Members.

We are writing on behalf of First Unitarian Church's Community for Earth, a social justice group at First Unitarian Church in Portland. Our faith is based on Core Principles which include a deep respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of which we are a part. The mission of our group, drawing on that Principle, is to embrace our role as humans in the web, and certainly to take action to mitigate and remediate climate change. Thus, we are compelled to write to you to urge you to pass the Pause Act - SB 681 out of the Finance and Revenue committee.

We don't need to remind you of the catastrophes that Oregon is already experiencing because of the climate crisis. Mega-droughts and fires, ocean dead zones, and extreme temperatures have propelled our elected officials to take strong action to protect us and the planet by doing our part and reducing our state's climate pollution. Oregon now has programs to make our transportation and electrical systems cleaner and safer.

We ask that this bill be the next step to align Oregon with the urgency of our times. We agree with the International Energy Agency's 2021 report which says, "If governments are serious about the climate crisis, there can be no new investments in oil, gas and coal, from now – from this year."

Our members are unified in passage of this bill, motivated by our faith, but also because many of us are PERS members. We want our retirement investments to be consistent with our values. We believe that it is wrong to threaten life on earth. None of us want to make our financial returns at the expense of harming ourselves, other humans, and the environment. And we believe long-term private investments in fossil fuels are too risky and volatile for a public pension fund that needs to secure retirement for those retired now and young public employees in the future.

Our faith compels us to ask you to act now to join more than one thousand institutions and governments, world-wide, who have agreed that we must stop investing in the destruction of the planet.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Bill Harris, Laura Rogers, and the Leadership Team,
on behalf of the full membership of Community for Earth, First Unitarian Church