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On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or SB1541
Topic:

This bill is not a “superfund.” It is a tax—plain and simple. And like every other energy tax, it will be paid by working Oregonians, not corporations.

Fuel costs will rise. Transportation costs will rise. Grocery prices will rise. Heating, hauling, logging, farming, ranching, and manufacturing will all become more expensive. That burden lands hardest on rural Oregon—the very communities this Legislature already ignores and overregulates.

Rural families drive farther. Rural businesses rely on fuel. There are no alternatives to diesel for logging trucks, farm equipment, or emergency response. SB 1541 punishes people for where they live and how they work.

This bill stacks on top of Oregon’s Climate Protection Program, which is already set to tighten dramatically in Phase 2 in 2027. SB 1541 doesn’t fix what’s broken—it doubles down. It compounds cost, uncertainty, and economic harm at a time when mills are closing, businesses are leaving, and jobs are disappearing.

SB 1541 proposes a “Climate Superfund” cost recovery program without a clear fiscal impact statement, yet the real economic consequences are foreseeable based on existing Oregon climate pricing frameworks. Independent economic modeling of Oregon’s Climate Protection Program (CPP) — a similar emissions cap-and-trade style program — projects increased delivered costs for transportation fuels and natural gas as compliance costs are passed on to consumers, disproportionately impacting households and businesses that rely on energy for everyday life. Utilities and energy suppliers themselves have acknowledged that compliance costs under such programs are likely to be reflected in higher prices for customers. Moreover, aggressive emissions reduction goals tied to these frameworks aim for deep fossil fuel reductions — policies that inherently increase costs for diesel, gasoline, and natural gas users when alternatives are not currently available, especially in rural areas. Without actuary fiscal impact analysis or exemptions for energy-dependent sectors, this bill risks exacerbating energy affordability challenges, undermining economic competitiveness, and shifting costs directly onto consumers, farmers, loggers, truckers, and rural families already struggling under existing climate-linked tax and fee structures.

SB 1541 also sets a dangerous precedent by allowing the state to retroactively assign financial blame for global climate impacts—costs that are speculative, unlimited, and legally vague. That creates massive risk for employers, drives investment out of Oregon, and tells job creators they are not welcome here. You cannot regulate your way to prosperity. You cannot tax rural Oregon into compliance. And you cannot claim to care about working families while passing

policies that make it more expensive to live, work, and survive in this state. SB 1541 is anti-worker, anti-rural, and anti-industry.