

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

My name is Helena Virga, and I live in Eugene, Oregon. I'm writing in strong support of SB 1541 and the creation of a Climate Resilience Superfund that makes the largest polluters pay for the damage they've caused, instead of shifting those costs onto everyday Oregonians.

I care deeply about environmental justice and about the communities who are hit first and hardest by climate change: rural communities, low-income communities, and communities of color. These are often the same communities facing the greatest wildfire risk, the least access to mitigation resources, and the most barriers to recovery. Funding from this bill would go where it's needed most, helping communities prepare for wildfire, extreme heat, and smoke rather than constantly reacting after disaster strikes.

Wildfires are no longer a seasonal issue in Oregon, they are a year-round reality. Prevention matters. Investments in defensible space, community preparedness, and landscape-level mitigation keep people safe, protect homes, and reduce long-term costs. Rural communities in particular deserve reliable funding to prepare for fire, not uncertainty year after year.

As an avid outdoorsperson, I also want to name how deeply personal this issue is for me. Oregon's forests, trails, and public lands are where I find healing, grounding, and connection. Increasing wildfire severity and smoke impacts have made it harder to safely access the places that sustain my mental and physical health. Strong wildfire prevention funding helps keep recreation areas open, ecosystems resilient, and communities safe at the same time.

It is only fair that the corporations most responsible for climate pollution help fund the solutions. Oregonians should not be forced to shoulder the costs alone while out-of-state polluters continue to profit.

I urge you to support SB 1541 and invest in a safer, more just, and more resilient future for Oregon.

Thank you for your time and leadership.