

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

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for introducing the Climate Superfund bill. I look forward to you passing it out of committee with a do-pass recommendation. The fossil fuel pollution during the covered period (1995 - 2024) from major polluters has been and will be responsible for many billions of dollars of damage in Oregon. During, and even before, the covered period major polluters knew full well the damage they were inflicting on us.*

Just like the tobacco companies who tried to hide the harms of smoking, the fossil fuel companies must be held accountable to pay for the harm they have knowingly caused. They have hundreds of billions of dollars in profits-- unfortunately partially fueled by government subsidies and tax breaks-- while ordinary Oregonians families, homes and businesses are being pummeled by climate disasters.

Especially with current fiscal challenges, we need the Climate Superfund. Funding for wildfire, flood, and heat dome resilience are indispensable. The giant corporations responsible for the damage should pay for it.

Sincerely,
Helena Birecki

*Annotated references:

- 1) about half of world-wide greenhouse gas emissions since the beginning of the industrial revolution (in 1750) have been emitted since 1995.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/264699/worldwide-co2-emissions/>.
- 2) The economic costs from the 2021 heat dome alone were between 1.3 billion and 4.6 billion dollars <https://www.sustainable-economy.org/economic-costs-of-climate-change-in-oregon-a-first-look>
- 3) "Documents demonstrate for the first time that fossil fuel companies internally do not dispute that they have understood since at least the 1960s that burning fossil fuels causes climate change and then worked for decades to undermine public understanding of this fact and to deny the underlying science"
https://www.budget.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fossil_fuel_report1.pdf