

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

Dear Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee legislators,

Oil and gas companies keep making obscene profits each year while we struggle with the damage and associated costs from the climate disaster they have caused. They knew decades ago that fossil fuels would lead to climate chaos, but they lied and denied the science, blocked alternatives and mediating legislations, and profited while taxpayers are left paying for the mounting costs of damages.

Every year, the human and financial costs of climate disasters keep rising both nationally and here in Oregon. Floods, fires, storms, droughts, and extreme heat are costing billions. These costs strain already overburdened state and local budgets, draining money needed for schools, transportation, healthcare, environmental protections, or public safety. Critical needs and services are being slashed.

Across the country, states are advancing climate superfund and Polluters' Pay legislation to require the largest fossil fuel companies to pay their fair share for the damages they knowingly caused. Vermont and New York have already enacted such legislation and twelve more states have bills under consideration this year. The concept is simple: the more you pollute, the more you pay.

And this isn't only about our state budgets, it's also about our people. Here in Oregon lives were lost during the heat dome and counties continue to rack up huge bills from trying to keep folks safe during extreme heat events. We all know the devastation from wildfires and from coastal flooding during atmospheric rivers. Our glaciers are melting and this winter's unusual warmth and lack of snow cover has everyone worried about even worsening drought. Almost every locality has its own story and deserves relief.

That's why I'm asking you to please support Senate Bill 1541. States, communities, and taxpayers shouldn't be on the hook for corporate greed. We need corporate responsibility and accountability. At a time when federal policies are dismantling climate and environmental protection programs, we need our states to act. Thanks for your time and consideration.