



February 5, 2026

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

Re: SB 1541 – SUPPORT

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Committee Members:

Friends of the Columbia Gorge (“Friends”) is a non-profit organization with approximately 4,000 members. Friends is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (“National Scenic Area” or “Gorge”). Friends’ priorities include policies focused on climate change mitigation and preparing the Gorge to adapt to climate change.

Friends supports SB 1541, which would establish the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program as an interagency response to climate change. This would be a key step for Oregon to properly address and mitigate the risks posed by climate change and prepare the state to adapt to the changing climate.

Large fossil fuel companies are responsible for a majority of climate change causing emissions but have avoided taking responsibility for the harm they have caused. For years, Oregon’s taxpayers have shouldered the burden of paying for the state’s response to climate change. This legislation will shift that burden to the responsible parties and ensure they pay their fair share to protect Oregon’s residents and its natural environment from the harmful impacts of climate change which they have significantly contributed to.

Climate change has many direct impacts on the National Scenic Area and several native species in the region. Reduced stream flows and warming air and water temperatures are posing threats to salmon and northwestern pond turtles, both of which are found in the Gorge. Rising temperatures also limit the acceptable habitat for the Gorge’s pika population, the only low-elevation population in the contiguous United States. Increased wildfire risk due to climate change has significant impact on the Gorge’s biodiversity and the communities living there. Taking steps to address climate change will be key to protecting this national treasure.

Please support SB 1541 and make polluters pay for the climate change disaster they have caused.

Sincerely,
Madison Kenney
Advocacy & Policy Coordinator