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Date: February 5, 2025

To: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Subject: Support for the Climate Resilience Superfund bill

Dear Chair Golden and Vice-Chair Nash and members of the committee,

We are writing as representatives of Community Energy Project (CEP) in support of the Climate Resilience Superfund Bill (SB 1514). CEP has been serving clients on the front lines of climate change including low-income, seniors and people with disabilities for over 50 years. CEP offers environmental and energy education, weatherization supplies, direct home repairs, and full energy retrofits, all at no cost to our community members.

Climate disasters are destroying our communities, disproportionately harming the health and wellbeing of communities of color, Tribal communities, low-income, and other environmental justice communities more than other populations. This funding can be a source of relief. We face a lot of these issues today because companies profited from their pollution without paying for the damage they have done. The superfund would create revenue for resiliency efforts across the state, at a time when funding is becoming increasingly dire. This fund presents a critical opportunity by allocating 30% of funds to wildfire prevention and mitigation, 70% to climate resilience and adaptation projects with a 40% screen over all funds to ensure benefits go to environmental justice communities.

Wildfire. In 2025 alone, more than 200 homes in Oregon were destroyed by wildfires. Climate change, prolonged drought, and increased vegetation dryness have converged to make wildfire danger a constant and growing threat for large parts of Oregon. As a result, wildfire season has grown longer, more frequent, and more destruction, disrupting public health and safety. This bill allocates much needed funds to address the growing threats of wildfire in Oregon.

Extreme Weather and High Energy Burden. In 2021, 201 people died due to the heat dome. Those in low-efficiency homes, those with limited access to heating and cooling equipment, and those with high energy burden were put at enormous risk, especially seniors and those with fragile health. Homes with high efficiency mean safety for those who live inside, from extreme temperatures, power outages, and smoke events. Currently, the financial burden of adapting these homes to changing weather patterns and extreme weather events falls on the residents or limited public grants. CEP works with clients that pay closer to 25% of their incomes towards their energy bills, which is much higher than 6% which is the agreed definition of energy burden.. The need for funding in this sector is enormous. SB 1514 would provide the 40% earmarked for 'highly impacted communities' that would be essential for communities that are both on the forefront and those with limited resources.

Job Creation. In 2025, CEP generated around 15,000 labor hours for small residential

contractors while helping 78 households become more physically and financially resilient in their homes. Nearly 60,000 Oregonians already work in clean energy. By creating this revenue stream we can help retain and create jobs for Oregonians while promoting resiliency within our communities.

CEP strongly supports the Climate Resilience Superfund Bill (SB 1514), as we believe that those who have caused harm should be responsible for helping fund the solution. This fund will allow for many Oregonians to live comfortably and affordably as these climate challenges persist.

Thank you,

Sara Wallach
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