



February 5, 2026

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

Willamette Riverkeeper submits this testimony in support of SB 1541 which would establish the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery program. Willamette Riverkeeper is a nonprofit organization that works to protect and restore the Willamette River and its tributaries through habitat restoration, education and outreach, and advocacy. We believe a climate resilient watershed is a healthy watershed.

Oregon is already experiencing the consequences of climate change. Longer and more intense wildfire seasons, prolonged drought, declining snowpack, and rising temperatures are no longer projections—they are realities affecting our rivers, communities, and ecosystems. In this context, SB 1541 represents a thoughtful and reasonable approach to funding the state's efforts to mitigate climate risks and prepare for a rapidly changing climate. In the Willamette Basin, these impacts show up as wildfire ash washing into rivers after major fire events, dangerously low summer flows that stress fish and limit recreation, and warmer water temperatures that fuel harmful algal blooms, posing risks to public health and aquatic life alike.

The fossil fuel industry is responsible for the majority of the emissions that are contributing to climate change. Yet, for decades, these companies have avoided accountability, leaving taxpayers and frontline communities to bear the escalating costs of climate-related damage. SB 1541 begins to correct that imbalance by requiring the largest polluters—companies responsible for more than one billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions—to contribute to the cost of addressing the harm they have caused. This bill does not impact small businesses.

SB 1541 would direct the Department of Land Conservation and Development to lead an interagency team to administer, develop and implement a coordinated climate resilience strategy, including investments in wildfire prevention, mitigation, and climate-adaptive infrastructure. Funding for this work is urgently needed, and it is most appropriate that funding come from the industries most responsible for creating this crisis.

Please support 1541 and make major polluters pay.

Thank you,

Michelle Emmons, Co-Executive Director and Upper Willamette Riverkeeper

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