

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

Dear Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire, I am writing as a longtime Oregonian in support of SB 1541 (The Make Polluters Pay Act) and the creation of the Climate Resilience Superfund. As things stand now, Oregonian tax payers and the State of Oregon are paying for climate related impacts (disaster relief, mitigation efforts, preparation for future disasters, public support for those most impacted by climate change) while the fossil fuel companies whose waste is responsible for the crisis are racking up profits. This is not fair! This bill is important to me because I live in rural Jackson county on 11 acres of forested land with my husband and 15-year old son. I moved here over 2 decades ago because I value living in a place where I can be safe and healthy. The effects of climate change have impacted our mental health, physical health, and ability to participate outdoor activities. Unfortunately, in spite of the fire mitigation thinning and slash removal efforts our family has done on our land, we now spend the dry half of each year living in fear of a forest fire that could take out our home. Since the 2020 fires that destroyed homes in Ashland, Talent, and Phoenix nearby, we have had 1-2 alerts each summer requiring us to pack our belongings and be ready at an instant's notice to evacuate. I'm sad that my son has grown up with this uncertainty and fear as a part of his seasonal reality. More financial support for community preparedness activities such as thinning, slash removal, creation of corridors along egress routes, and controlled burns across Oregon on public and private lands would make residents safer in our current warming, drying climate. Additionally, my family and I have suffered from the poor air quality each summer due to wildfires. The region of southern Oregon where we live has some of the most severe and persistent wildfire smoke in all of Oregon each summer. My husband is in his 60's, thus more susceptible to the negative health impacts of the poor air quality than average. Likewise, my son's growing lungs have been exposed to airborne carcinogens during their development. My husband's work in the construction industry has him working outside all summer long, and our family's lifestyle is highly based around outdoor activities. We take what precautions we can to reduce exposure, but we are all at higher risk of developing pulmonary complications over our lifetime due to the high level of exposure. Each summer, we get out our three respirator face masks and hang them by our front door. When we head out, we put on our mask. This has been our routine for the last several summers, and it is heartbreaking to see my son mask up like this in order to be able to spend time outside in the summer months. From wildfires to polluted water, we've seen communities across the state bear the brunt of our climate crisis. For too long, the cost of cleaning up the impacts of climate change has been the responsibility of us Oregonians and our local governments. We've been

footing the bill while fossil fuel companies rake in the profits. That must end. As legislators, you have the power to shift the costs from your constituents to these mega corporations. I urge you to pass SB 1541 and finally make these polluters pay for the damage they've done to communities across our state. Sincerely, Sarah Fowler