

Submitter: Alissa Tower

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1541

This bill is important to me because Oregonians are already paying a high cost for climate change and it's past time that corporations help foot the bill for the costs associated with climate change. I live in Bend, one of Oregon's communities that has been severely impacted by wildfire smoke in the last several years. In the fall of 2024, a year that was considered "not that bad" of a smoke season, my daughter missed 19 days of preschool due to poor air quality. For each of those missed days, our family and all of her classmates' families had to scramble to figure out childcare. Here's the thing. We have yet to find a good forecaster for smoke so nearly every morning from early September through mid to late October, we had to check the AQI in the morning to know whether she could go to preschool that day. We would often go to bed with mostly clear air and wake up to a disgusting, smoky haze. As a 4 year old, my daughter is well-versed in the AQI ratings and hopes for green or at least yellow days, but has known far too many days of unhealthy, very unhealthy, and hazardous AQI. My husband and I paid for the wildfire smoke by missing appointments and paying late cancellation fees, cancelling work meetings, and paying double childcare when we could not miss work. We have air purifiers in all our bedrooms and main living areas. We have paid to better seal our home and improve our HVAC system. And even though we are careful about when we let our children play outside in the summer and fall, our children and their friends will likely be paying the price of exposure to toxic air for the rest of their lives. 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.