



www.RogueClimate.org || PO Box 1980, Phoenix, OR 97535 || 541-301-9204

Coos Bay Office: 243 S. 2nd St. Coos Bay, OR 97420 || 541- 816-0758

Re: Rogue Climate Testimony regarding SB 1541

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of SB 1541: the Climate Resilience Superfund bill. With offices in Phoenix, and Coos Bay, Rogue Climate's mission is to empower Southern Oregon communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, and communities of color. Rogue Climate is a proud member of the Make Polluters Pay Coalition, made up of over 47 Oregon-based organizations calling on state legislators to join a national movement of holding Big Oil accountable.

Rogue Climate has seen firsthand the long-lasting impacts of wildfires on Oregon families in the Rogue Valley, when the Almeda fire destroyed 2,600 homes, disproportionately impacting low-income and Latine/x families. Many are still recovering six years later and holding the trauma of that life-upending experience. The fire also burnt down our office, which had been a vital community gathering space for years prior. Our team jumped into action establishing the Fire Relief Center to support community members to find housing, meet their basic needs, and to ensure a just recovery. This direct response was crucial in our community, and was one of the only sources of aid available.

Growing wildfire risk and the costs of rebuilding have driven insurance premiums up in Oregon by more than 27% since 2020, directly impacting affordability for Southern Oregonians to remain in their homes. Since the Almeda fire, community members in towns like Talent have experienced power outages during 100+ degree days as part of an effort to reduce wildfire risk, but this left people without power during dangerous, extreme temperatures. For people with disabilities, elders and children in our communities, this extreme weather can be deadly, as we saw in the 2020 heat dome. It is beyond time to invest in long-term resilience solutions for Oregonians.

Resilience measures like home hardening, control burns, resilience hubs, and multi-lingual alert systems could have kept the Almeda fire from burning so hot so fast - and saved many homes and livelihoods. Yet, in the midst of budget shortfalls, the Legislature has failed to invest long-term in the solutions we know that will reduce the burden of climate disasters down the line. Oregonians continue to shoulder the cost of preparedness and recovery, while the fossil fuel corporations responsible bring in record profits.



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South Coast community members are experiencing record-breaking high temperatures and increased wildfire risk, like the Anvil Fire of 2023, and the threat of flooding and more extreme storms. Coastal flooding and landslides over the holidays already caused expensive damage to coastal roadways and kept folks from being able to leave home for work, groceries or medical care. Just a couple weeks ago, we saw another king tide flooding event that restricted travel in downtown Coos Bay on the already crumbling highway 101. This consistent flooding leaves coastal residents in a cycle of weakened roadways, frequent travel delays and the inability to meet daily needs like going to work, school or the doctor. From 1990-2020, the number of high-tide flooding events has tripled across the United States and are expected to [triple again by 2050](#). Flooding costs are only expected to grow with sea level rise, but these damages are avoidable with appropriate investments. The Climate Resilience Superfund could enable critical infrastructure investments to reduce the impacts of major coastal flooding events.

The Climate Resilience Superfund is a wise investment in the future of our state. It is expected to bring in over \$15 billion - 30% focused on wildfire mitigation, and the rest for other necessary measures like restoration-based flood prevention, ductless heat pump efficient cooling for extreme weather, and resilience hubs. We know these solutions work - from installing hundreds of efficient ductless heat pumps in Jackson, Coos and Klamath Counties, to building resilience networks in the Rogue Valley - Rogue Climate has been leading on implementation. The question is who will pay - Oregonians, or the largest polluters who caused these crises?

Last week 400 youth walked out of four rural high schools in the Rogue Valley demanding their state leaders Make Polluters Pay. They could not join us today because they're in class - but they want you to know "Big oil should not emit with no price to pay. Oregonians will keep pushing for bills like this."

We know our communities cannot continue to prepare for and respond to extreme weather events while also paying for decades of past harms. With federal, state and local budget deficits, we know that we need an innovative revenue stream that isn't a tax or fee on Oregon residents, businesses or industries. The Climate Resilience Superfund offers a creative solution.



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Legislators, you have a choice – continue to stall substantive action as the cost of mitigating climate disasters continues to grow. Or, take the courageous step these times call for and pass the Climate Resilience Superfund. It's time to hold Big Oil responsible for those costs and invest in the resilience our communities need - please vote yes in support of SB 1541.

Sincerely,

Jess Grady-Benson, Organizing Director
Zöe Serrano, Legislative Coordinator