

Good afternoon and thank you for the time to speak on SB 1541. My name is Paloma Ronca and I live in Ashland, Oregon, and I am an environmental chemist, and I support SB 1541.

I have lived in the western United States my whole life and have always felt the presence of fires, and have experienced firsthand how dangerous they can be. A study published in 2016 showed that “Since the 1970s, human-caused increases in temperature and vapor pressure deficit (low humidity) have dried out (fuel) across western continental US forests,... this approximately doubled the western US forest fire area beyond that expected from natural climate variability alone during 1984–2015”. (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27791053/>) DOUBLED!

Another study in 2021 confirmed this. “The dominant control on the fire weather variation in the WUS has changed from natural climate variability to anthropogenically forced warming... This change in risk requires urgent and effective societal adaptation and mitigation responses.” (<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2111875118#executive-summary-abstract>)

So who should pay for the consequences of human caused climate disasters, and invest in more robust, safer communities? The companies who knew that investing in a fossil fuel driven economy would have devastating impacts, and chose profit over safety.

“In 2015, investigative journalists discovered... that Exxon oil company has known since the late 1970s that its fossil fuel products could lead to global warming with ‘dramatic environmental effects before the year 2050.’ ...By contrast, the majority of Mobil and ExxonMobil Corp’s public communications promoted doubt on the matter.” (<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abk0063>)

They did the math and decided that human-caused climate change and the disasters that come with it were worth it because of the profit that they would, and have, reaped. This is not right.

Exxon, one of the companies that this bill would fine, achieved its highest full-year net production in more than 40 years (<https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/30/exxonmobil-xom-4q-2025-earnings.html>) and Exxon’s profits for 2025 was \$28.8 BILLION dollars. (<https://energynews.africa/2026/02/02/exxonmobil-posts-6-5bn-q4-earnings-as-full-year-profit-falls-to-28-8bn/>)

From Exxon’s sustainability report for 2025: “As we work to be a leader in a thoughtful energy transition, we will continue to develop our workforce, empower local economic growth, mitigate impacts of our operations, and engage with and support our communities.” (<https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/sustainability-and-reports/sustainability#Aboutthereport>) Exxon and companies like it say that they are committed to a better world. So shouldn’t they be happy to invest in communities affected by climate disasters, especially if they knew that their actions would cause climate change? Or is it just greenwashing. Let’s make them put their money where their mouth is.

I know that there are people in the community worried about costs being passed on to consumers. As someone who struggles to make ends meet, I too shared this concern until I did some additional research. Since this bill would only target the largest polluters and not tax future greenhouse gas emissions, it would not affect all market participants. Therefore, the companies that it does target would not be able to raise costs significantly or they would be priced out by the companies that this bill is not aimed at.

I am sure that these companies and constituents of these companies will say that this bill will be bad for small businesses. But when one business is making 28 BILLION dollars and one business gets burned down because they did not have the funds to invest in building-hardening, I think that it is clear that small businesses are not in the best interest of large oil corporations. It is up to the state and legislature to pass measures that ensure funds to protect small businesses, lives, and the environment. Please vote YES on SB 1541.

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