

Testimony in Support of SB 1541

TO: Oregon Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
From: Ernie Niemi, President, Natural Resource Economics **January 7, 2026**

SB 1541 Is Good for Oregon Jobs

Testimony in opposition to SB 1541, in the hearing on February 5, 2006, included these two arguments. Evidence shows they are erroneous, and I urge legislators to reject them.

A. *Implementation of SB 1541 will discourage new businesses from locating or expanding in Oregon because it will increase uncertainty by signaling that polluting businesses might be asked later to contribute to a superfund to clean up the pollution.*

Response A.1: Implementing SB 1541 will make Oregon more, not less attractive to businesses by reducing, not increasing uncertainty. It will do so by increasing resources available to make Oregon's communities, workers, transportation systems, and other public services more resilient to future climate extremes. Resources available through the Climate Resilience Superfund will reduce the likelihood that extremes will disrupt and harm Oregon's businesses.

Response A.2: Industries that make money for investors by pushing costs onto society—making a mess—will decrease, not increase, the well-being of Oregonians. Prof. Stiglitz emphasized this point when he explained allowing polluters to not pay is inefficient and reduced economic well-being..

B. *Implementation of SB 1541 will reduce jobs for Oregon's workers.*

Response B.1: Implementing SB 1541 will make Oregon more, not less attractive for job-creating investments by businesses sensitive to uncertainty. It will do so by making the state more resilient to disruptions from extreme events (flooding, drought, wildfire, heatwave, etc.).

Response B.2: Oregon State University estimated that a “major smoke event” can reduce the value of goods and services produced in the state (GDP) that year by at least \$1 billion.¹ In 2024, Oregon supported 2.2 million jobs as it produced GDP of \$265 billion. In other words, about 8,300 jobs per \$1 billion GDP.² Every time revenues from SB 1541 prevent one “major smoke event,” it will prevent the loss of 8,300 jobs.

Response B.3: Every \$1 billion from the Climate Resilience Superfund spent on job-creating investments to increase the resilience of Oregon's workers, families, businesses, communities, and ecosystems will create 8,300 new jobs for Oregon's workers.

Response B.3: SB 1541 points to investments that increase resilience to wildfire, reducing threats to existing jobs in agriculture, timber, other industries.

¹ Sterns, J., and T. Beavers. 2025. Potential Economic Impacts of a major Wildfire Smoke Event in Oregon. in Fleishman, E., editor. 2025. [Seventh Oregon Climate Assessment](#). Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, Oregon State University. pp. 121-129.

² Cunningham, S. 2025. [Oregon Jobs Projected to Increase 6% by 2034](#); and Wallis, L. 2025. [Oregon's Gross Domestic Product – A Measure of the Economy](#). Oregon Employment Department.