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Climate Resilience Superfund

Damages from climate change are increasingly costly to both human health and the natural environment, and are now almost entirely borne by the people of Oregon. These costs are projected to rise dramatically as the climate crisis worsens. Without dedicated state investment in prevention and resilience now, Oregon communities will be left vulnerable as the climate crisis worsens. Since the warming climate is largely a consequence of burning coal, oil and, natural gas, it is appropriate for history's largest fossil polluting companies, who reaped enormous profits, to contribute to these damage costs.

Why Now

- In 2024 alone, climate-fueled **wildfires** burned nearly 2 million acres and **cost Oregon over $350 million**. Last year, 200 more homes were destroyed by wildfires.
- According to NOAA analysis, the 2023 **drought** affecting Oregon resulted in an estimated **$14.8 billion in costs** and led to 247 documented deaths.
- Heatwaves, like the 2021 Heatdome, killed more than 100 people, and had **economic impacts between $1.3 billion and $4.6 billion** due to mortality and health effects.
- The economic ripple effects of smoke-related health issues and lost productivity are estimated to **cost Oregon up to $1 billion in GDP** during heavy smoke years.

Under current policy, most climate-driven costs in Oregon are paid by taxpayers, ratepayers, and local governments. Oregon's Climate Resilience Superfund bill would require large fossil fuel suppliers to pay their fair share for past damages arising from climate change.

How The Bill Works

Under the bill, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) will lead an interagency team to administer the bill's provisions. This team will create a climate resilience implementation strategy including, but not limited to, wildfire prevention and mitigation, nature-based solutions, and climate adaptive infrastructure. Here are a few other key aspects of the bill:

- Responsible fossil fuel firms must have emitted greenhouse gases worldwide in excess of a specified threshold during 1995-2024. The interagency team will use the best available science to identify these firms, and the relative amounts charged to each.
- Payments are required in proportion to a company's share of carbon dioxide emissions over the historical period. Well-established research makes it possible to attribute emissions to specific companies based on the amounts of coal, oil and gas burned.

- This approach focuses on reducing future costs by strengthening resilience rather than relying solely on reactive spending after disasters hit.
- The bill establishes a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program Account, separate from the Treasury's General Fund. Within the funds dispersed, 30% must be allocated to wildfire prevention and 40% of the remaining funds are dedicated to benefiting the frontline communities most exposed to climate damages.
- This bill does not preempt the Multnomah County lawsuit or displace any other liabilities that responsible parties may have under other laws.

The resulting funds will prioritize preparing homes, buildings, powerlines, and more to be wildfire safe; sustainable, preventative work to cut down on wildfire risk in the first place; more energy efficient cooling and home weatherization to protect us from extreme heat and smoke, while lowering utility bills; rebuilding better and more resilient after major floods or wildfires; combating water shortages with more efficient irrigation equipment for Oregon farmers.

Supporters

- the environmental center
- Rogue Climate
- 350 PDX
- Beyond Toxics
- FUSEE – Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics & Ecology
- Food & Water Watch
- Oregon Just Transition Alliance
- Oregon Conservation Network
- Douglas County Global Warming Coalition
- VERDE
- OLCV – Oregon League of Conservation Voters
- Oregon Rural Action – Sowing Seeds of Change
- Oregon PSR – Physicians for Social Responsibility
- The Climate Reality Project – Portland Chapter
- climate solutions
- Oregon Synod – Walking Together Into Courageous Love – Disaster & Climate Resilience
- Community Energy Project
- Sacred Organizing Coalition
- MCAT – Mobilizing Climate Action Together
- nca – Neighbors for Clean Air
- APANO
- Sierra Club Oregon Chapter
- SOCAN – Southern Oregon Climate Action Now – Empowering action through science
- 350 Salem OR
- oec – Oregon Environmental Council
- PCUN
- Third Act Oregon
- Columbia Riverkeeper