



## OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

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To: Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee and Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: March 1, 2017

RE: Senate Bills 557 and 748

Chair Helm, Chair Dembrow, and Members of the Committees: On behalf of the more than 20,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club in Oregon, I am pleased to provide this written testimony in support of Senate Bills 557 and 748.

As an organization with a long history working to move beyond fossil fuels in Oregon, we support these bills and believe they are worthy of your support as well. Global climate change is the biggest environmental, social, and political challenge of our time. Unless we act swiftly and immediately to curb emissions of heat-trapping pollutants, especially carbon dioxide, we will be unable to mitigate the worst effects of this crisis: rising sea levels; mass plant and animals extinctions; an increasing scarcity of crucial natural resources; a greater frequency of extreme weather events; the spread of toxins, pests, and pathogens; widespread displacement of peoples; and unprecedented social upheaval.

Senate Bill 557 and Senate 748 are necessary components of what Oregon needs to be doing to combat climate disruption and institute a comprehensive policy to account for the true costs of climate pollution. And though we are a small state, Oregon plays a role in the global problem of climate change, so it is incumbent on us to also be part of the solution. By providing a true accounting of the price of carbon in our state's economy, we can encourage further investment in beneficial policies and technologies like energy efficiency, conservation, and renewables and simultaneously move away from planet-destroying pollution. Capping and pricing climate pollution allows us to make those necessary investments in energy efficiency and other cost-effective measures while providing real benefits to our state's economy, people, and environment.

Indeed, these bills will open the door to cost-effective, market-based solutions that will benefit Oregon's economy. Our state can realize new jobs, cleaner air, and local, renewable energy if we place a limit and price on the largest sources of climate pollution. The proceeds from these programs could be invested in clean energy technologies to help revitalize communities while also benefiting the

environment. These policies will provide much needed employment in our state as we poise Oregon as a leader in clean energy technologies.

It is also vitally important that these policies be crafted with an eye toward rectifying injustices that have been done and are being done to low-income communities and communities of color. We believe that the just transition components of these bills are a step in the right direction of moving our state to a clean energy economy while also protecting and raising up those communities who have been most impacted by our current and previous practices.

Ultimately, the solution to our climate woes is to transition off dirty fuels to efficient and renewable energy. Capping and pricing pollution and accounting for the true costs of carbon and other greenhouse gases are the most effective and efficient ways to incentivize the market to cut climate pollution while growing Oregon's economy. For these reasons, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club supports Senate Bill 557 and Senate Bill 748 as necessary programs to limit carbon pollution and account for its true costs. Thank you very much for considering our comments and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance to the Committee.