

Submitter: Ann Turner  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2151

Date: March 1, 2025

To: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Subject: Support HB 2151

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, and members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

My name is Ann Turner. I am a retired physician, a member of and Co-President of the Board of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (Oregon PSR), and a member of the Risk Bond Coalition. Oregon PSR works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 2151.

A Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake in the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub would result in an oil spill akin to the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, immeasurable cultural losses, detrimental impacts to human health, and massive costs in damages, possibly totaling to billions. It's not a question of IF, but WHEN ... a disaster will occur that will endanger the lives of employees working in the HUB and those in surrounding neighborhoods as well as emergency responders.

Scientists predict there is about a 37% chance that an earthquake of 7.1+ magnitude in the Cascadia Subduction Zone will occur in the next 50 years. More than 90% of all liquid fuel in Oregon is stored at facilities in the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub. Unfortunately, the CEI Hub was built on unstable soil subject to liquefaction and lateral spreading in an earthquake. For this reason, I am urging you to support HB 2151. This bill expands the ways monies in the Seismic Risk Mitigation Fund may be received and used, which is essential for fuel-related disaster preparedness and response.

As a physician, I am especially concerned about the health and safety risks of an earthquake, accident or other natural disaster in the CEI Hub. The release of these volatile fuels, additives and gasses can easily ignite and release a toxic plume of air pollutants that are dangerous for those working at the site and first responders but also to those in surrounding neighborhoods, not only people but pets, livestock and wildlife. The air pollutants released include volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and sulfur dioxide. They are associated with increased risks of cancer, asthma, exacerbation of chronic respiratory diseases, strokes, and low birthweight and premature babies.

The health costs would be enormous, estimated at between \$121 and \$249 million. The costs to cleanup an oil spill as a result of a Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake are projected to be between \$109 million to \$1.4 billion.

We will not be able to count on help from the federal programs through the EPA or FEMA. For example, Lee Zeldin, the new Administrator of the EPA reported that the EPA plans to cut 65% of its staff. In addition, more than 200 employees at FEMA, an already understaffed agency, have been laid off. President Trump has said that managing disasters is best left to the States themselves. No State, including Oregon, can afford the cost of major disasters.

In addition, I strongly urge you not to adopt an amendment that would pre-empt action by an entity other than the State that precludes another governmental entity such as Multnomah County from taking action now. The State would always have the option of assuming responsibility at a later date. Acting now rather than months or years down the road makes us safer. One of the key tactics of the fossil fuel industry is delay, delay, delay. We need to take action NOW. I urge you to pass HB 2151.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Ann Turner, MD