

Concerning HB 2488 and

(a) "Communities" means groups of people living in a common geographic area within a shared political jurisdiction or area in which they live, work, learn and practice spirituality and culture

(b) "Disadvantaged communities" includes communities with a population largely composed of individuals who are low income, very low income or persons of color.

Comment: The terms "Communities" and "Disadvantaged communities" need to be re-thought and re-defined to include all communities that are being impacted and expect to be impacted by climate change.

Rural communities don't currently seem to be included in the focus of this bill, but rural communities have been historically underserved. Rural communities often have the lowest paying job base. In February 2021 it would appear that rural communities were among the hardest hit by the unprecedented weather and ice storm. The average power outage duration would appear to be (and continues to not be fully restored at the time of writing 2-22-21) more than twice as long in rural communities. Among my urban family and friends some had no power outage and no one had a power outage longer than 4 days. At our rural home we were without power 8 days. I understand that Canby, Silverton and Stayton, etc. and surrounding areas are the hardest hit. In rural areas being without power usually means being without water or sanitation, being unable to water livestock, being unable to work from home (due to interrupted internet); it also can mean, due to less road maintenance, it being harder for longer to get to work. During the Sept. 2020 wildfires rural Clackamas County, not the urban areas in the area, were the ones that were in full evacuation status. My rural arterial was over crowded with congestion, largely due to urban growth without adequate infrastructure, so that despite being in a Level 3 evacuation "go now" zone we sat on the road in stand still congestion for hours (this example is Hwy 213 and Beavercreek Rd). Some rural residents needed to make multiple trips to evacuate livestock so this congestion endangered many lives. It's rural roads that are by-and-large NOT up to roadway standards; even extremely-congested urban roads normally are up to roadway standards. Bringing rural roadways up to ordinary standards has not been a state priority for decades.

When rural communities are historically disadvantaged and on the frontlines of climate change, climate justice bills should not exclude them from primary consideration. Data should be used to define "disadvantaged communities" – average income levels of similarly-sized areas, numbers of local jobs and pay rates, evacuation times, average power outage durations, frequency of evacuations, loss of toilet facilities, loss of water, loss of internet.

Race should not be a "disadvantage community" identifier unless the data demonstrates that there is a correlation. When data shows there is a correlation with other communities being disadvantaged, then the data should lead to them being included. How will you know if you are noticing disadvantaged communities if you are only looking for race?

How will "spirituality" or "culture" be used to identify a community? Does this mean that the community needs to go to the same church or be uniformly atheist? Does a community have to have a uniform culture for its "disadvantage" to be recognized? What is meant by culture? It doesn't seem to be defined. Should an area with non-homogeneous culture (or spirituality) be treated fairly?