



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

March 17, 2021

Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senator Lynn Findley, Vice-Chair
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association in Support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 17

Dear Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) supports the passage of SCR 17. Passage of the resolution would establish crucial environmental justice principles for the State of Oregon. These principles will help ensure that the State's environmental and climate solutions address structural socioeconomic inequities based on a history of economic and social inequality. Key elements of those principles include:

- Holding State agencies responsible to respond to the health, environmental, economic, and climate crises.
- Expecting State agencies to address environmental justice when implementing their portfolios, taking advice from the Environmental Justice Task Force.
- Making reparative investments in front line communities focused on healthy food, renewable energy, infrastructure, clean air and water, and good jobs.
- Investing in solutions to air, water, and land pollution and protection from climate hazards, including investments in watershed and water infrastructure.
- Promoting a regenerative economy in Oregon based on community health protection that respects traditional ecological knowledge systems and the full participation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members, essential workers, youth, low-income, and those most vulnerable in rural and urban communities.

OAPA is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit educational organization of more than 800 planners from across the state who work for cities, counties, special districts, state agencies, tribes, community-based organizations, universities, and private firms. We provide leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and resident empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change. OAPA supports sustainable communities and works to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by



helping to create and stabilize places that are equitable, healthy, and resilient and provide ongoing economic, environmental, and social benefits.

SCR 17 aligns with OAPA's 2021 Legislative Priorities to:

- **Confront climate change** — Oregon needs to act now to confront climate change. More needs to be done to mitigate climate change and to help communities adapt and become more resilient to its impacts, while addressing the inequitable impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities. We support legislation that prioritizes planning and assistance for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members and other vulnerable communities, and centering their voices when developing policy.
- **Promote resiliency and recovery.** Oregon is facing unprecedented challenges – including the coronavirus pandemic, economic crisis, and recent wildfires – that require immediate and ongoing action to help communities recover and rebuild. There is an increased urgency to ensure communities can withstand and bounce back from natural hazards and other disasters. We support legislation that promotes funding for the planning and development of infrastructure and that advances environmental justice to address inequities and prioritizing vulnerable communities in recovery and resiliency strategies.
- **Advance racial equity** — Anti-racism needs to be centered in policy and planning work in Oregon. Deliberate efforts need to be made to advance racial equity and combat systemic racism in the state. We support legislation that changes to public engagement processes to explicitly advance anti-racism and elevate the voices of BIPOC and other traditionally-underrepresented communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. OAPA believes that SCR 17 is an important step in achieving environmental and climate justice and recommends the Committee vote the resolution out with a Do Pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Ray'.

Aaron Ray, AICP, President
Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eunice Kim'.

Eunice Kim, AICP, Chair
Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee