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The Honorable Sen. Chris Edwards, Co-Chair
The Honorable Rep. Ben Unger, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Natural Resources Subcommittee
900 Court Street NE
H-170 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

RE: LRAPA – DEQ Partnership

Dear Senator Edwards, Representative Unger and members of the Natural Resources Subcommittee:

I am Bill Brommelsiek, a citizen member and the current Chair of the Board of Directors of the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA). LRAPA greatly values our 45-year partnership with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). We believe that the State of Oregon has received an excellent return on its investment in LRAPA, and this investment has benefited both the environment and the economy.

LRAPA supports the Governor's recommended budget and requests that your subcommittee not consider any further reductions in LRAPA or DEQ funding.

The intergovernmental agreement to form LRAPA in 1968 under state statute has allowed local governments to more effectively and efficiently reduce air pollution and improve air quality within Lane County. LRAPA and its stakeholders have been remarkably successful in meeting air quality health standards on or ahead of schedule. A recent evaluation of air quality activities in Lane County confirms that LRAPA is the most cost-effective way to meet air quality standards in our area.

State funds are critical for leveraging local, federal and other funds. A reduction of state funds would result in significant losses of air quality progress, local control, grant funding to local communities, and potential economic development. More of the costs to implement air quality programs would fall to local governments that are already financially challenged.

LRAPA also supports DEQ's budget. Our two agencies work well together, and an adequately funded DEQ is important to LRAPA's continued success. LRAPA's air monitoring programs and airshed plans are closely integrated with DEQ's. We rely on the DEQ air monitoring laboratory for quality assurance and specialized sample analysis. LRAPA's permit streamlining efforts are based on recent DEQ efficiency improvements. DEQ staff assistance has been critical for adoption of our airshed plans by the Environmental Quality Commission into the State Implementation Plan to meet federal Clean Air Act requirements.

Achieving air quality health standards is important not only for protecting public health and the environment, but also for economic development. It is important for businesses wanting to locate or expand in Lane County.

You have some hard decisions ahead of you. We recognize the difficulties of the overall state budget situation. But LRAPA continues to be one of the best-leveraged investments Oregon can make. Our citizens need your support to continue to improve air quality and economic development.

Sincerely,

William Brommelsiek, Chair, Board of Directors
Lane Regional Air Protection Agency