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**Testimony to the House Committee on Energy and Environment
February 11th, 2014**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We bring Oregonians together for a healthy environment.

The Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) **supports HJM 201**. This resolution urges Congress to strengthen safety standards for new tank rail cars and to require retrofitting of existing tank cars to ensure safety.

As members of this committee know, the oil and gas boom in North Dakota has led to a dramatic increase in the amount of crude oil being shipped by rail. As the Oregonian reported, the number of oil trains travelling through Portland alone increased from almost none to over 100 each year in the last six years. We all remember the oil train fire in Scappoose in 2011 – luckily, despite a close call, Oregon hasn't had any additional fires since then.

However, while the National Transportation Safety Board recently recommended that the Federal Rail Administration and the Hazardous Materials Safety Administration improve tank car safety standards, the rulemaking could take years to complete. In addition, these federal agencies have not acted to require upgrading of existing tank cars to meet today's safety standards. Retrofitting existing cars for safety is critical to avoiding these costly and damaging fires.

Retrofitting oil tank cars is not only important for the health and safety of the community and our environment, but it's potentially life saving for the first responders who battle these fires.

Congress should act immediately to improve the safety of oil tank cars, so we urge your support of HJM 201.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this Committee.

On behalf of Oregon Environmental Council
Angela Crowley-Koch