

February 2nd, 2015

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, Room 347
Salem, Oregon 97301

Multnomah County Supports SB 324 and Implementation of A Clean Fuels Program in Oregon

As the public health authority, Multnomah County is very concerned with the air quality impacts due to the use of fossil fuels in the transportation sector. Multnomah County is also very concerned about the health risks from climate change, and transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gases in the region. For these reasons, Multnomah County is in support of the adoption of SB 324, repealing the sunset date for the State of Oregon's clean fuels program.

The Department of Environmental Quality led Portland Air Toxics Solutions process identified cars and trucks as a major contributor to poor air quality Multnomah County. Air quality in Multnomah County is a significant problem, with several key air toxics produced by cars and trucks at more than ten times over health benchmarks. Poor air quality poses a significant health risk for everyone in Multnomah County, but falls hardest on children, people of color and people in poverty. These are many of the same groups that the Multnomah County serves through its community health and anti-poverty programs, undermining the County's mission of a "healthy, safe and prosperous community for all". Fully implementing a clean fuels program in Oregon supports this mission.

Climate change poses a significant threat to the health and well being of the people in Multnomah County and across the state. The transportation sector produces 40% of the emissions in Multnomah County. Multnomah County is working hard to support livable communities and alternative modes of transportation. Reducing the carbon content of our fuels, and using less fuel over all, are critical strategies for achieving local and state climate goals.

Multnomah County supports a clean fuels program to support a thriving local and state economy. Money spent on fossil fuels produced outside of Oregon is exporting economic development potential in the clean energy economy. Multnomah County recognizes this opportunity, and has supported clean fuels in its operations by using biodiesel blends in its diesel equipment, integrating electric vehicles into its fleet, and supporting electric vehicle charging stations in public spaces like libraries.

Multnomah County urges passage of SB 324.