

Dear Ms. Thielecirka and Reiley,

Oregonians deserve the cleanest air possible. Right now, many Oregonians are suffering needlessly because of weak environmental regulations that allow higher levels of diesel particulate matter than both California and Washington. Currently, Oregon has the sixth highest level of diesel emissions in the country and Multnomah County has the fourth highest level. Because of Oregon's weak diesel standards, we have become a dumping ground for dirty diesel engines that are no longer legal in California and Washington. Older, outdated diesel engines emit nearly 100 times as much harmful toxins into our air, water, and soil. If Oregon's weak environmental standards continue, dirty diesel will have an ever increasing negative impact on both public health and the economy.

The public health costs of dirty diesel are enormous. Diesel emissions increase our risks of cancer, asthma, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and pre-term and low-weight births. Thus, the true costs of dirty diesel are shouldered by the residents of Oregon, not the corporations that use them. In fact, it is estimated that the public health costs of dirty diesel costs Oregonians over three billion dollars a year. As a resident of Multnomah County, I have witnessed first-hand on several occasions heavy construction equipment releasing thick black soot into the air. For several years now, during my daily commute, I pass by the construction site at the base of the Sellwood Bridge and have noticed on many occasions gross-polluting trucks either entering or leaving the site spewing dirty diesel into our air. The same thing has been happening in my neighborhood (Eastmoreland) on a daily basis during the sewer reconstruction project from the use of old, outdated backhoes and steamrollers. I have had to find alternate routes to walk my son home from school because of the negative impact our poor air quality is having on my son's asthma. I often wonder if my son would even have asthma if we didn't live in Portland, as his asthma symptoms often clear up when we leave the area.

The time to act is now. We can no longer turn a blind eye to the true environmental and public health costs of weak regulation when it comes to Oregon's air quality. Older, outdated diesel engines are having a devastating impact on our state and the people that call Oregon home. I urge you to please support the passage of both HB 3310 and SB 824.

Sincerely,
Vivian Christensen
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Portland, OR 97202