

March 31, 2015

Oregon Legislature
Senate Environment & NR Committee
Attn: Samantha.koopman@state.or.us



Re: Support for SB 824

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, I would offer our support for SB 824. Environmental health inequity has been a concern in Oregon for a long time, and air pollution is one of the paramount environmental justice issues today.

From 2009 to 2012, I served on DEQ's Portland Air Toxics Solutions Advisory Committee (PATSAAC), in an effort to create consensus-based recommendations for mitigating exposure to hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) across the region. My primary concern was that communities of color and low-income communities face a greater risk from air toxics than white, more affluent communities, and I worked to develop strategies that addressed this disproportionate risk of exposure.

The primary source of risk from air toxics (assuming a fully protective health-based standard) is On-Road Mobile emissions, specifically emissions from cars and trucks. This is the leading cause of health risks to our communities, yet is one of the more difficult sources of risk to regulate. We all contribute to this risk through our everyday behavior, whether driving or consuming goods that are shipped by freight.

One clear way to mitigate risk of exposure from on-road mobile air toxics is to prevent unnecessary idling in our communities, both from cars and trucks. Unbeknownst to myself, while developing anti-idling strategies within DEQ's collaborative process during the 2011 legislative session, the Oregon Trucking Association was actively working to undermine those efforts, passing a prohibition on local anti-idling measures, preventing DEQ from pursuing those strategies. While shrouded under a cloak of economy and freight, it has had a very real effect of exacerbating health risks for our most vulnerable and overburdened communities.

SB 824 rights this injustice by removing the preemption on local governments, which will enable local jurisdictions to utilize a broader array of health-based strategies to ensure greater health equity and environmental health protection. Simply put, SB 824 is necessary for environmental justice in the Portland metro region and across the state, and OPAL endorses HB 3310 with a DO PASS position.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jonathan S. Ostar
Jonathan Ostar, Executive Director
2407 SE 49th Avenue, Portland, OR 97206

T: 503-342-8910 // W: www.opalpdx.org