

From the desk of Rep. Rob Nosse

2/29/16



Support SB 1547 B: Clean Electricity and Coal Transition

To Oregon Legislators and Governor Brown,

As public health advocates and practitioners of healthcare, we see the negative effects of climate change on Oregonian's health at increasingly alarming rates. Changes to our climate have the potential to cause sickness, spread disease and lead to potentially life threatening conditions by harming air quality, increasing severe temperatures and extreme weather events, and damaging our food and water supply chains. This public health risk is a statewide problem: urban centers are plagued by higher levels of air pollution and heat islands; and suburban and rural Oregonians are on the front lines of extreme weather impacts like flash floods, wildfires and heavy storms.

The evidence is clear; higher levels of greenhouse gases are making the planet an alarmingly more dangerous place to live. Whether it is increased instances of asthma and respiratory illness, heat related illness and cardiovascular complications, the spread of sickness and disease or increased instances of allergies, all can be affected. Most troubling is that the most vulnerable are also the most susceptible to these harmful effects: the young and old, people with compromised immune systems, the chronically sick and low-income people with inadequate access to health care will be impacted most frequently and severely.

It is with these health and safety concerns in mind that we support SB 1547 B, a critically important bill that would take Oregon out of the market for coal-fired electricity and double the state's use of renewable energy sources by the year 2040. Doubling the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard will mean that, combined with our existing hydro power base, around 80% of Oregon's energy comes from clean, non-polluting sources that do not put people's health at risk and contaminate the places where they live.

As healthcare providers and public health advocates, we make every effort we can to prevent harm, but we also realize that we can do more. Supporting SB 1547 B represents an opportunity to mitigate the root cause of a health threat multiplier and abate the costs associated with medical treatment into the future. Prevention is as equally important as treatment; doing our fair share to reduce climate pollution in the electricity sector and removing barriers to electric vehicle enhances both global climate stabilization and local air pollution reduction. Supporting this bill will make Oregon a national leader in renewable energy, and will demonstrate a commitment to Oregonian's health, quality of life and the communities in which we live and serve.

Sincerely,

American Lung Association Oregon
Neighbors for Clean Air
Oregon Nurses Association
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Oregon Federation of Nurses and Healthcare Professionals

Oregon Public Health Association
Oregon Affiliate of American College of Nurse-Midwives
Upstream Public Health