



OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB
1821 SE Ankeny St. Portland, 97214
Phone (503) 238.0442
www.oregon.sierraclub.org
oregonchapter@sierraclub.org

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Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club, I respectfully request your support for HB 2355. The Oregon Work Group on the Prevention of Profiling by Law Enforcement has met for the past two years and we are pleased with the conclusions that the stakeholders have reached in HB 2355.

Sierra Club's mission includes "...Educat[ing] and enlist[ing] humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment." In order to fulfill this mission, we rely on community members to identify and speak out about environmental pollution. Profiling is a barrier to community members being able to fully participate in our democracy and in environmental advocacy. Studies show that people of color, immigrants, and English language learners are disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution, and so it is doubly important that we end profiling against people of color, immigrants, and people with other targeted identities.

Every day people are targeted based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, language, housing status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. While the legislature passed a ban on police profiling in 2015, there is still no structure in place to effectively identify, record, and correct any profiling practices by Oregon law enforcement agencies.

By passing HB 2355 Oregon will continue to work to change the culture of policing, while also making neighborhoods safer and communities stronger. It is crucial that we begin to collect data on all officer-initiated pedestrian and traffic stops, provide updated and regular training to all levels of law enforcement, and accountability measures and guidance for departments that need to correct patterns and practices of profiling.

HB 2355 also addresses the collateral consequences of a profiling and disparities in convictions by reducing the charges for certain drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. This will help communities break the cycle of incarceration and recidivism.

Oregon needs to take the next step to end profiling. The Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 2355. We must end profiling so that targeted communities face fewer barriers to speaking out about environmental pollution in Oregon. Thank you for considering my comments and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely

Rhett Lawrence, Conservation Director
Sierra Club, Oregon Chapter