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222 NW Davis Street
Suite 309
Portland, OR 97209-3900
503.222.1963
www.oeconline.org

Written Testimony to the House Committee on Energy and Environment on HB 2748

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**Chris Hagerbaumer, Deputy Director of Programs
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council supports HB 2748.

OEC served on the 22-member wood smoke work group convened in response to HB 3068 of 2015 (sponsored by Rep. Johnson). The work group delved deeply into the health concerns of wood smoke pollution, the economic needs of communities particularly affected by wood smoke pollution, cultural values around fireplaces and wood stoves, the potential solutions to wood smoke pollution, how biomass fits in, and more. Across the board, the committee members took this issue very seriously, and the members of the public we heard from were all quite concerned about how wood smoke impacts their health.

I was very impressed by local efforts to address wood smoke, from Klamath Falls to Oakridge, from Pendleton to Washington County. As one example, before starting a wood stove replacement program in 2000, the City of Pendleton surveyed its residents and found that there were about 800 uncertified wood stoves in the city and that a third of the survey respondents had experienced health problems due to air pollution. A combination of grants from U.S. HUD, EPA and perhaps other sources allowed Pendleton to work with residents to provide interest-free loans to replace 186 wood stoves with new EPA-certified heating systems (142 natural gas stoves, 22 wood stoves, 12 pellet stoves, and 10 electric or other). Pendleton also started a 7th grade Air Quality Education program at Sunridge Middle School in 2000, and that program is still running strong. Pendleton's residents are breathing purer air, and the city is meeting federal standards for particulate pollution.

Pendleton's experience is just one example of how local communities will take action to reduce wood smoke pollution when they have the resources to do so. To that end HB 2748 (along with HB 2124 and HB 2725, which received a hearing on the first day of session) are devised to help locals meet the challenge.

HB 2748 makes a small tweak to existing law to allow all monies from *any* source, public or private to be credited to the Residential Solid Fuel Heating Air Quality Improvement Fund for the purpose of reducing the emission of air contaminants from solid fuel burning devices.

OEC supports HB 2748, HB 2124 and HB 2725 because funding is definitely needed for community-based education/outreach programs and to help households replace their wood stoves with better alternatives, especially low-income households.

A combination of education, incentives, and in some cases policy solutions, is needed to clean our air and improve the health of Oregonians in large and small communities all across the state.

Thank you for your consideration.