



Oregon Public
Health Association

Oregon Public Health Association

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www.OregonPublicHealth.org

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Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources,

I'm writing today to express the Oregon Public Health Association's support for Senate Bill 1008 and urge you to quickly advance this important piece of public health legislation.

At the Oregon Public Health Association, we recognize that health is much more than healthcare. We know that the environments in which we live, work, learn and play have a tremendous influence on our ability to live long and healthy lives. We also know that many of these environments in Oregon have levels of diesel pollution many times above health-based benchmarks. Perhaps most alarming is the impact on our children.

Children are uniquely vulnerable to environmental hazards. They breathe more air per pound of body weight relative to adults, and stress on their developing systems can result in lifelong impacts. Over the past several years, evidence has emerged demonstrating that when pregnant moms are exposed to the fine particulate matter from mobile sources (including diesel engines), their babies are at an increased risk of pre-term and low-weight births. These are conditions that can alter the life course of an individual's health.

Ten years ago, the Legislature established a goal that all of the school busses in Oregon would be replaced or retrofitted by 2017. 2017 has come and children around the state still rely on dirty polluting busses to bring them to and from schools. We cannot continue burdening our communities and future generations with cost of our inaction.

Senate Bill 1008, along with an infusion of funds from the Volkswagen settlement agreement presents a unique opportunity to clean up Oregon's dirty diesel fleet once and for all. The Oregon Public Health Association supports action now and urges the legislature to prioritize a clean fleet of school busses around the state, so that all children can reach their full health potential.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the Oregon Public Health Association or our support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jessica Nischik-Long, MPH
Executive Director