

My name is Vivian Christensen and I am a resident of South East Portland.

Thank you for holding this important hearing on the need to have stronger regulations for diesel pollution in Oregon. (# SB 1008).

We all know that diesel pollution causes cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, preterm birth, as well as respiratory illness such as asthma. In fact, Oregon ranks among the five worst states for asthma. The impact of diesel pollution in our state has been shouldered by the residents of Oregon rather than the companies that are using outdated trucks and construction equipment. The public health costs of diesel pollution for Oregon is over 3 billion dollars per year.

I'd like to take a minute to illustrate this point by telling you about my family's experience. As I mentioned, I live in SE Portland not far from Brooklyn Yard which is a truck to train transfer facility. This is significant for several reasons. First, we are exposed to trains with diesel polluting engines that pass by my neighborhood, but we also are exposed to the diesel exhaust from old semi-trucks that travel to and from the container transfer terminal. Most of these trucks are what we would characterize as gross polluters.

My 11-year-old son was diagnosed with asthma when he was 5. My son has had to deal with missed school days, visits to the emergency room, and countless visits to his pediatrician. Each time he experiences an exacerbation with his asthma he becomes really anxious and scared. I don't know if any of you have asthma, but not being able to breathe is truly an awful experience. I can tell you that as a parent, it's painful to watch your child suffer like this.

My son's asthma has also cost our family thousands of dollars in out of pocket expenses for his medical care and has resulted in missed work days for both me and my husband.

Oddly enough, my son has never had to use his rescue inhaler even once while traveling outside of the area – this includes trips to large city centers such as Copenhagen, San Francisco, and even Seattle.

It's important to note, though, that exposure to diesel pollution is also an environmental justice issue. In Oregon, those with the highest prevalence of exposure are those in low income households and people of color who disproportionately live closer to highways and industrial centers. These are also the people who can least afford the costs associated with having chronic health conditions.

I'm asking you today to please consider Oregonians who suffer from chronic health conditions and the impact diesel pollution is having on our health and economy when voting on this very important piece of legislation. It's time that we invest in clean air as California and Washington have. Given the funds that are available from the Volkswagen settlement, the time to act is now.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vivian Christensen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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