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**Testimony to the House Environment and Energy Committee
on House Bill 2669
Toxics Reporting and Community Right To Know
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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council urges support for HB 2669 to update and improve the local community right to know regulatory program for toxic and harmful substances.

As an organization that works at the nexus of human health and the environment, OEC advocates for adoption of safer alternatives to hazardous materials as well as responsible stewardship programs to reduce both waste and exposure.

We support HB 2669 and a materials balancing approach to reporting for three reasons. First, it encourages strong protocols for stewardship of hazardous materials; second, it provides data that can help researchers evaluate cumulative and synergistic effects of releases to the environment; third, provisions for local programs and public disclosure empowers communities that experience disproportionate impacts to better evaluate concerns.

Strong protocols for stewardship of hazards: No matter the care we take, accidents happen. Valves and gaskets leak, materials are spilled or dropped, chemicals are mixed in dirty containers. In addition, it's only human that occasional ignorance or neglect will lead to releases to the environment. When more than ten thousand facilities in Oregon are using any of a hundred different hazardous materials¹, it is also human nature that some of those incidents may go unnoticed or unreported.

By adopting a materials balancing approach, facilities must ensure that inputs balance outputs. This accounting for hazards will help ensure that releases are not overlooked, encouraging facilities to better recognize the risk and liability posed by hazardous materials. Better accounting can also encourage facilities to make informed decisions

about the return on investment for adopting safer alternatives.

Cumulative effects: When releases to the environment are evaluated in the context of past, present and future releases in a community, the overall environmental and human health effects may differ. Pollutants may not only add up, but also become greater than their sum when they react synergistically or when they travel a complex pathway in the environment to create a secondary hazard. Accounting for what may seem like an insignificant release of a hazardous material can provide critical data necessary for public health researchers to better understand human health implications.

Empowering communities, mobilizing innovation: Public release of data allows for greater collaboration between health and environmental stakeholders, better equipping our state's researchers and innovators to plan, apply, and evaluate public health actions. Providing for local initiatives that generate better public information about hazardous materials is also one way to ensure greater participation in decision-making. Environmental justice requires that all Oregonians have both equal protection from environmental and health hazards and also opportunities for meaningful public participation in decisions that affect the environment in which they live.

The Oregon Environmental Council, on behalf of our members throughout Oregon, urges support for HB 2669.

ⁱ Oregon office of the fire marshal, 2014 CR2K annual summary; accessed online 3/17/17; <http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/docs/CR2K/CR2KAnnualSummary.pdf>