

Chairman Helm and other members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment,

My name is Carroll Johnston. I live in Salem, Oregon; and I am a Vietnam War veteran.

I support House Bill 2669 because "What you don't know CAN hurt you".

During the Vietnam War, unknown to me, I was exposed to a horrific poison called dioxin. Ignorance of my exposure to dioxin did not prevent it from causing me to have a tumor grow on my back, develop asthma, and experience negative effects on my digestive system. Those effects were all too real and had a profound effect on my life.

Because of my experience and because many of us already carry the burden of previous exposures, I know we need data. Even as I speak to you, dioxin as well as many other toxins that have short-term or bioaccumulative effects are being emitted from smokestacks or washed into our soil and waterways right here in Oregon. As toxic emissions from Portland art glass factories amply demonstrated last year, we often don't know the source of toxic emissions, much less the amounts. We can't even begin to answer questions about their dispersion nor health effects because we don't have adequate data.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has inadequate resources to monitor the air throughout the State on a continuous basis. House Bill 2669 could make more efficient use of DEQ's scarce resources by helping communities zero in on potential toxic emission sources. People in local jurisdictions have an intense interest in knowing what might be harmful in the air that they and their children are breathing. Implementing House Bill 2669 will go a long way toward helping them find out. It will also help DEQ focus their efforts to the greatest effect.

I strongly urge you to support House Bill 2669.

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