



April 10, 2017

TO: The Honorable Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

FROM: Jere High, Administrator  
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SUBJECT: SB 871, Lead-based Paint in Demolitions

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee; my name is Jere High, and I'm the Administrator of the Center for Health Protection with the Oregon Health Authority. I'm here to provide testimony on the health hazards of lead-based paint with respect to residential demolitions.

Lead is a toxic metal that serves no useful purpose in the human body. Lead is particularly dangerous to children because their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to its damaging effects. In Oregon, the leading cause of childhood lead poisoning is exposure to lead-based paint.

The Oregon Health Authority regulates specific activities that involve lead-based paint, including abatement activities and renovation, repair and painting. However, this regulatory authority does not extend to residential demolitions, creating a regulatory gap. Studies have shown that lead dust can become airborne during the demolition process and spread to surrounding properties, creating potential health hazards for neighbors.

Although this bill does not require action of the part of the Oregon Health Authority, our staff are available to assist local partners in the development of plans or best practices to reduce lead dust emissions during the demolition process.

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I'm available as a resource to the committee if there are any questions or concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.