



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 871
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Speaker of the House Tina Kotek
April 10, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 871.

Research has proven that asbestos and lead-based paint are hazardous to human health. Exposure to these materials can increase risks of lung disease, developmental delays in children, and other serious health problems. SB 871 with the -1 amendment would authorize cities and counties to require that before a residential building is demolished, neighbors must be notified and plans must be prepared to address asbestos abatement and contain lead particles that otherwise would be released into the air.

Today I want to thank my constituents, Joseph and Jennifer Dezso, for their tireless work on this issue. In February, they learned that a developer planned to demolish the 1930s-era home and garage next to their property in North Portland. At the time, Jennifer was nine months pregnant with their first child, and they grew concerned about the risks of airborne lead and asbestos demolition dust. The garage, which is on the property line between the two homes, had been shedding old siding tiles into their yard, and testing confirmed their fears: asbestos was present.

Joseph and Jennifer spent many, many hours speaking with or writing emails to representatives of the Portland Bureau of Development Services, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Construction Contractors Board, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other groups – just to protect their health against a very well-known hazard.

Thankfully, Joseph and Jennifer had the time, energy, and environmental and legal knowledge to push the developer to survey and abate for hazardous materials. Their son was born on March 20, less than one month ago, and they are hoping their advocacy will encourage the contractor to proceed in a safe manner. They are rightfully scared for their newborn son, and I join them in urging support for SB 871 to close the demolition loopholes that have placed their family and fellow Oregonians at risk.

Thank you for taking up this important issue.