

April 13, 2017

House Committee on Rules  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2101 and the need for a Sunshine Committee

Dear Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

We, a collection of Oregon non-profit organizations representing thousands of Oregonians, are writing to request that you support increasing transparency and accountability in State of Oregon government by ensuring the process of updating Oregon's public records laws is done in the full light of day. To do that, Oregon needs a Sunshine Committee that involves a diversity of Oregonians, including lawmakers, as well as experts, and members of the public committed to open government to ensure the job of fixing Oregon's Public Record Law is done in a manner that is transparent and encourages full public involvement. States like Washington, Maine and Virginia have similar committees that are open to the public, transparent, and help ensure public trust.

We are concerned that HB 2101 does not include a provision for a Sunshine Committee and that instead it would encourage a process where a significant range of lobbyists and special interests could work to influence the bill largely out of public sight. We believe setting up a good process is key to achieving a good result and that HB 2101 as written would miss a key opportunity to do just that.

We encourage the Committee to take the time to get the plan to update Oregon Public Record Law right and carefully consider an amendment to HB 2101 that would include a Sunshine Committee as a central part of the bill. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Mary Peveto, Neighbors for Clean Air

Jo Ann Hardesty, NAACP Portland Branch

Elise Higley, Our Family Farms Coalition

David Delk, Alliance for Democracy

Brett Vandenheuvell, Columbia Riverkeeper

Julia DeGraw, Food & Water Watch

Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper

Adriana Voss-Andreae, 350PDX

Lisa Arkin, Beyond Toxics

Jessica Applegate, Eastside Portland Air Coalition

Mark Riskedahl, Northwest Environmental Defense Center

Brent Foster, Native Species Project

Mary Middleton, Oregonians for Safe Farms and Families