



PROTECTING YOUR
RIGHT TO ROAM

May 19, 2017

To: Senate Rules Committee

SUBJECT: Oregon Walks: Testimony on Oregon Senate Bill 1008

Chair Burdick & Members of the Senate Rules Committee,

Oregon Walks is the state's pedestrian advocacy organization. We work to make walking safe, convenient and accessible for every Oregonian in every community across the state. We are writing this letter in firm support of restoring Senate Bill 1008's "Clean Engines, Clean Air Act" as it was originally written before it was stripped of important health and safety provisions by the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

For far too many Oregonians, there are numerous barriers to living in a neighborhood that encourages and empowers everyday residents to safely walk to their bus stop, their children's elementary school, and everyday neighborhood destinations. **We recognize that the significant health hazards posed by diesel pollution are experienced most by those that walk, bike, and otherwise live near the major highways and arterials where diesel pollution is at its highest.**

Public health authorities have highlighted the acute health impacts of diesel emissions, with the International Agency for Research on Cancer classifying diesel engine exhaust as a Class 1 carcinogen. Across the world, air pollution causes 1.3 million deaths a year in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants alone, and exposes countless more to environmental pollution in both urban and rural environments.

According to EPA's National Air Toxics Assessment, Oregon has the third largest population at risk of excess cancer due to air pollution behind only California and New York. Moreover, across Oregon, 117 schools fall in the worst 10% nationally for exposure to industrial pollution.

It is unacceptable that many Oregonians have to worry about whether their children will be unnecessarily exposed to these carcinogens while they walk to school because our environmental regulations have not been stringent enough to protect their lives. It's distressing to acknowledge that the urban and rural communities most likely to experience disproportionate negative health impacts from the lack of diesel regulations are the same communities that



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experience disproportionate negative impacts from traffic violence along high collision corridors; it's essential that Oregon legislators rise to the challenge to address this critical public health issue to ensure all Oregonians are able to enjoy a healthy environment, especially those that live in proximity to busy freeways and are exposed to diesel pollution on a daily basis.

We echo the calls outlined by community advocates including Neighbors for Clean Air, the Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon League of Conservation Voters and OPAL – Environmental Justice Oregon to stand up for healthy, walkable communities across the state of Oregon. We urge the Oregon Senate to affirm a robust commitment to healthy communities and support clean air for every Oregonian.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noel Mickelberry".

Noel Mickelberry
Executive Director