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Testimony to the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources on Senate Bill 1008

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council supports SB 1008B.

Diesel engines have superior longevity and durability, but unfortunately, older diesel engines emit toxic exhaust that compromises the health of many Oregonians: in fact, 90% of Oregonians live where diesel exhaust exceeds health benchmarks.

Diesel is a serious public health problem in Oregon. We are disappointed that the critical pieces of SB 1008 – the deadlines to phase out of dirty diesel engines in Oregon – have been removed from the bill. Without these deadlines there is no guarantee of pollution reduction outside of regular fleet turnover. How many more generations of Oregonians will be subjected to these unhealthy levels of diesel in our air because of industry pressure?

Diesel pollution is a straightforward issue; we know we have a problem, we know that the health impacts are serious - especially for children, the elderly and those already have increased health risks - the solutions to address this problem exist and the money is there to assist industry with cleaning up their pollution. Despite this clear path to cleaner air, the legislature has failed Oregonians by not taking the important step of setting deadlines to get rid of dirty engines.

However, we already have deadlines in the law to clean up Oregon school buses and we should give school districts funding to comply with the law. The current bill before you takes this small step to cleaning our air – it allows schools extra time to retrofit buses, extending the deadline to 2025. It also allows the Volkswagen settlement funding to be used by school districts for retrofits and upgrades.

Fourteen years ago, OEC published a report, "Dirt on Diesel," that included a number of recommendations for reducing people's exposure to diesel pollution. Since that time, federal regulations for cleaner fuel and technology have resulted in high-performing vehicles that operate efficiently and with dramatically reduced pollution. But the task of addressing in-use engines was left to state authorities. Sadly, 14 years have gone by

without Oregon adopting a proactive approach to protecting human health from toxic diesel emissions.

OEC published a new report in 2016 (which was submitted previously for the record) which details the latest research on the health impacts of diesel pollution, why Oregon has fallen behind on protecting its residents, and how the problem can be addressed.

Our report and numerous health studies make it clear that Oregon will continue to pay a high price for diesel exhaust for decades longer unless we take legislative action. In order to protect public health in a way that works for our economy, Oregon needs a balance of incentives and standards which:

- Create a clean-up fund and prioritize investments
- Stop the dumping of out-of-state dirty diesel engines into Oregon
- Set pollution standards for both on-road diesel fleets and off-road diesel engines
- Accelerate the clean up of off-road engines used in public contracts
- Allow local governments to implement their own idling ordinances

At the informational hearing on the health impacts of diesel a couple of weeks ago and in further testimony today, you have heard a lot about the human health impacts of diesel. We'd like to point out that diesel soot is also North America's most significant source of black carbon—a potent but short-lived climate forcer. The fine particles in diesel exhaust—known as “black carbon”—absorb solar radiation and emit it as heat, causing snow and ice to melt quicker. Because they affect the properties of clouds, these particles also affect precipitation. Unlike carbon dioxide, which can stay in the atmosphere for centuries, black carbon remains in the air for just a few weeks. So reducing black carbon now results in almost immediate benefits to our climate.

Thus the imperative to clean up dirty diesel is huge: To protect people's health, to address environmental justice, and to combat climate change, Oregon needs to act on diesel this session. We simply can't wait any longer.

Thank you for your consideration.