

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
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OCBA Testimony in Support of SB 1008B
June 29, 2017, 1 pm, HR 174
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Co-Chair Sen. Frederick, Co-Chair Representative Witt, Senators Girod and Taylor, Representatives Esquivel, Helm, Lewis and Power:

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) supports SB 1008B which establishes a path forward for Oregon around the role of diesel engines in air quality. The Commission has a long history of concern along with neighborhood and environmental groups with the poor air quality in communities of color and low income communities often situated along primary roads and highways. Idling engines and roads with heavy truck traffic along with nearby industrial sites contribute to the higher incidence of asthma and heart conditions in these neighborhoods which affects school attendance and work performance.

OCBA believes that establishing clean diesel standards in Oregon is a critical part of the solution. SB 1008B is a step in the right direction focusing the Clean Diesel Trust Fund with Oregon's VW settlement funds on school bus engines, and conducting Oregon's first inventory of off road diesel engines used widely in construction and industrial areas. SB 1008B does not address the issue of standards for highway diesel engines which OCBA considers to be a key part of relief for communities of color and low income neighborhoods clustered along highways, but we commend the legislators who have worked on crafting this current legislation as a good start.

There are a growing number of studies about the pernicious effect of diesel particulates specifically around asthma rates and heart conditions due to their fineness and ability to permeate cell walls. The OCBA offers interested legislators an opportunity for literature reviews and best state practices through collaborative policy research on these subjects. We support this bill and needed future public policy work on clean diesel as a supportive partner.

Thank you for your positive consideration of SB 1008B.

Sincerely,

James Morris, Chair

OCBA Commissioner/EJTF Liaison

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