



Testimony to the House Committee on Energy and Environment HB 2124 and HB 2725

February 1, 2017

Mary Peveto, President, Neighbors for Clean Air

Neighbors for Clean Air supports HB 2124 and HB 2725.

Neighbors for Clean Air had several members and partners who served on the 22-member wood smoke work group convened in response to HB 3068 of 2015 (sponsored by Rep. Johnson). In addition, I served on the City Club of Portland Air Quality Advocacy Committee from 2012 – 2014 which prioritized the problem of woodsmoke and diesel as key issues to address in the wake of the Department of Environmental Quality Portland Air Toxics Solutions project. Our members have been hopeful that the outcomes of the workgroup would be much needed resources to address the health risk in our communities due to the burning of wood for heat and cooking purposes. Fine particles in woodsmoke that are one-30th the size of a human hair, known as PM-2.5 — can cause cancer and aggravate respiratory illnesses such as asthma. New woodstoves are more efficient and cleaner-burning, reducing air pollution and health hazards, and cutting down on wood costs.

Washington County recently developed and executed a highly successful woodstove change out program aimed to reduce PM 2.5 in the region which has seen increasing levels, coming dangerously close to putting our air shed out of compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The goal for the first year was 50 changeouts, hoping to replace 700 by year five, in line with DEQ's recommendations for achieving clean air goals. By December, only months into the program the county had received 200 applications. Multnomah County is developing a similar program based on Washington County's success.

This is proof that programs that aim to provide grants and rebates can have an immediate impact on reducing dangerous PM 2.5 pollution. Reducing PM 2.5 is something that is supported by both public health advocates and the industries which operate in areas where there are high levels. For example, violations of federal air-



quality standards anywhere in the Portland area can trigger restrictions on new industrial development in all three counties.

It is unfortunate that while the programs that HB 2124 and HB 2725 create were recommended by the Woodsmoke workgroup, in yesterday's budget review with DEQ, the funding for the woodsmoke emission reduction program was cut from the agency's final package due to budget constraints.

HB 2124 allows the existing Residential Solid Fuel Heating Air Quality Improvement Fund to provide not only grants, loans or other subsidies, but also *rebates*, for replacing or removing an uncertified solid fuel burning device.

HB 2725 is based on the work group's recommendations and creates a grant program for providing funding to local service providers to develop and implement wood stove replacement rebate programs.

2016 saw an unprecedented call for action on air pollution in Oregon. Not unlike diesel engines, the solution to the problem of woodsmoke in our communities is readily at hand. Oregon began certifying woodstoves in 1983, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1988. New federal standards took effect in 2015, but they affect only new woodstoves. These bills help fund the outreach and implementation of an important curtailment program to reduce harmful fine particulate emissions in Oregon by accelerating the turnover to new equipment and fuels.

Thank you for your consideration. NCA hopes you will support HB 2124 and HB 2725.