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ATTN: Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

Chair Dembrow & members of the committee,

OPPOSE

My name is Sal Peralta,

I am testifying on behalf of the Independent Party of Oregon in opposition to SB 1541, which seeks to limit the proper functioning of DEQ by tying funding for the agency to provisions that appear to weaken and subvert the agency's two year rule making process.

This kind of approach is the opposite direction of the one that should be taken by this body. Instead of confusing the issue or tying agency funding to these rules and setting in statute provisions that weaken current public health protections, the legislature should be seeking to strengthen Oregon's regulatory framework.

We note that a recent audit by Oregon's Secretary of State indicated that Oregon's DEQ is underfunded and lacks the ability to adequately protect the health of Oregonians from industrial emissions and other sources of pollution.

Multnomah County is among the worst 1 to 2 percent of counties in the nation for respiratory disease and other kinds of distress due to poor air quality, according to a 2015 study by the Environmental Protection Agency. This is, in part, due to past decisions by this body that have placed the needs of industrial polluters above the needs of everyday Oregonians.

It is past time for this body to stop catering to the demands of interests of industries that seek to maintain a weak, ineffectual and unenforced regulatory framework and instead place the health and safety of Oregonians front-and-center in your deliberations on this issue.

Respectfully,

Sal Peralta