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ATTN: Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

Chair Dembrow & members of the committee,

My name is Sal Peralta. I am Secretary of the Independent Party of Oregon. Our party supports SB 1508, which establishes a fee-based framework for better regulating industrial commercial sources of air contamination.

We note that earlier this year, Secretary of State, Dennis Richardson released an audit of Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality that indicated that the agency is underfunded and lacks the resources to adequately regulate Oregon's air quality¹, which rates among the worst in the nation.

The impacts of airborne pollution are felt disproportionately hard by places where most Oregonians live. For example, Multnomah County air ranked in the worst 1% of counties nationwide for concentrations of diesel particulate, according to the last EPA National Air Toxics Assessment (December 2015). The same study ranked Portland as the worst city nationwide for respiratory distress and Multnomah County in the worst 2% of U.S. Counties for cancer risk²

We further note that, in addition to increased funding, Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality is also in need of increased oversight by the Oregon legislature. A 2016 review by THE OREGONIAN of the state's handling of toxic air quality in Portland found that the agency was "timid, leaderless and consistently influenced by industry interests."³

Respectfully,
Sal Peralta

¹ <http://www.oregon.gov/newsroom/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?newsid=2496>

² <https://www.epa.gov/national-air-toxics-assessment>

³ http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2016/04/gov_kate_brown_unveils_toxic_a.html