



House Committee on Energy and the Environment
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

February 12, 2018

Re: Cleaner Air Oregon– HB 4002, SB 1508, and SB 1541

Dear Chair Dembrow, Chair Helm, and members of the Joint Committee:

The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) expresses our continued support for common-sense reform to address air toxics. The CCC is an alliance of 19 culturally-specific community-based organizations working to advance racial justice by addressing socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity in services. We are a diverse coalition of community leaders, organizers, direct service providers, and racial justice advocates that represent a broad cross-section of communities in Oregon. Our members represent and serve over 180,000 individuals across the state.

Communities of color all too often bear the brunt of disproportionate toxic air exposure as a result of exclusionary land zoning practices that have resulted in our communities. Historically, communities of color have been in greatest density and proximity to industrial areas, major transportation corridors, and rail yards, among other sources of toxic pollution. While gentrification as a result of economic, social, and environmental discrimination has resulted in geographic displacement, it stands communities of color still face disproportionate impact from toxic air emissions. *The Guardian* recently published “Air pollution: black, Hispanic and poor students most at risk from toxins – study,” which listed the ten worst polluted school counties in the country. Multnomah County was included in this list.

Funding for Cleaner Air Oregon (CAO) is critical and urgent - if the legislature doesn't fund CAO in 2018 - the program will not be implemented and our communities continue to be harmed. The Secretary of State's audit affirms that DEQ is under resourced and staff for the air quality program are underrepresented among existing staff. CAO will help DEQ implement their existing responsibilities and program more effectively to the benefit of all Oregonians.

We also found the two-year process on CAO inclusive of all stakeholders, including industry. This process has resulted in a program that is good for businesses and the public. Establishing permit conditions based on human health and a more predictable and consistent method of applying those standards meets the needs of both industry and public. Associated fees are nominal and reflect consistency with programs across the country, to bring Oregon more in-line with other effective air toxics programs.

We stand in opposition to legislative action that strips DEQ's authority to monitor and regulate harmful pollution and air contaminants and that weakens health base standards. DEQ must retain its authority and flexibility to reduce the Risk Action Level for neurotoxins to the non-cancer Hazard Index (HI). The current language sets the floor at Health Hazard of 10, which fails to protect our communities, families, and children from many of the toxics of highest concern.

Getting CAO off the ground and off to a good start is a key priority for our communities and communities across the state. Please, keep Oregon out of international headlines for poisoning our most vulnerable children. The Coalition of Communities of Color hopes you will join us in our collective efforts to reduce air toxics, making frontline communities and the health of Oregonians a priority.

Please contact maggie@coalitioncommunitiescolor.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,





A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Tallmadge".

Margaret Tallmadge
Environmental Justice Manager, Coalition of Communities of Color