



OPAL
Environmental Justice Oregon

opalpdx.org

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January 31, 2019

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

RE: Support House Bill (HB) 2272

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2272. We would like to indicate our strong support for the passage of this bill.

OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon's mission is *Building power for Environmental Justice and Civil Rights in our Communities*. We organize low income people and people of color to achieve a safe and healthy environment in the places we live, work, learn, pray, and play.

Our communities are those who experience first and worst the impacts of environmental racism, and often our neighborhoods are the dumping ground for polluters locally, regionally, nationally and globally. This bill before you is a long overdue piece of legislation and a step in the right direction to make sure that waste is managed properly, and environmental justice communities do not continue to suffer from the burdens of environmental health hazards.

HB 2272 is well-aligned with environmental justice principles. It removes burdens, enabling low-income individuals to live healthy lives. Reducing exposure to health hazards in our communities is a priority. People of color and low income people have less choices concerning where we live compared to more-affluent communities. Our communities often cannot afford to pay a premium in order to live in areas free of environmental toxics. These vulnerable people are forced to live in environmentally degraded communities, leading to shorter life spans and reduced quality of life.

Polluters have the primary responsibility for managing their waste in a proper and safe manner. Living up to this responsibility benefits all Oregon communities' health, wealth and opportunity. By holding manufacturers accountable for their hazardous material production today, we can spur innovation to create safer materials in the near future. We urge you to move this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Maria Hernandez
Policy and Advocacy Manager
OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon