



Dear Co-chair Reardon and Taylor and members of the committee,

I am Eva Rippeteau, political coordinator with AFSCME Council 75. I am here today to support our members at DEQ Local 3336 and advocate for the additional funding and positions being asked for in their budget and fee increases in HB 5017 & HB 5018. Lately, I've heard a lot about how "people" or "legislators" just don't like DEQ. Mostly this has been in the context of the creation of the proposed Climate Authority and I'll come back to that in a moment but first would like to say that the employees at DEQ are dedicated public servants. They take pride in their work and as scientists and analysts know that integrity in their work is of the utmost importance for the protection of our environment and public health. To be able to make these intensive data informed decisions, they need the staffing that supports the workload. In 2011, along with many state agency budgets, DEQ's budget took a significant hit and around 100 positions were cut. Over the last couple of sessions there have been some positions added, but it isn't to the level that is needed to meet the workload. In 2016 when there was controversy over the lack health based air toxic standards, we were able to show that when proper resources are put to a problem, it can be resolved.

Perhaps it is this dedication to the mission of doing their work informed by data combined with the long-time underfunding of the agency that creates so much dislike. Or to put it another way, there are three buckets of people who are grumpy about DEQ. First are the people who don't like regulation. Second are the people who might be frustrated because of the length of time it takes to get issues resolved. Third are those who are disappointed that DEQ doesn't meet their expectations of providing better protections of our environment. To the first bucket of people, I ask you to consider the world we are leaving younger generations and those yet to come. I also ask you to consider regulatory certainty and fairness in regulation and how having a properly funded agency supports this. To the second and third buckets, I offer that you should be supporting providing DEQ with more resources and staffing to do the work they are charged with doing. And to the third bucket, if you wish to see them doing more, you might be in a position to direct them to do more to protect the environment. DEQ cannot regulate pollution that they don't have the regulatory authority to regulate.

There is one thing that we do oppose; it is moving the 4 greenhouse gases positions slated to move into the proposed Climate Authority. There are two main reasons in regards to the work at DEQ. First the greenhouse gas staff track, review and analyze the greenhouse gas inventory work for the Department. There is a lot of cross work and collaboration with other sections and staff at DEQ that work on climate policy - materials management, product life cycle analysis, low carbon fuels, transportation planning, electric vehicle policy, diesel pollution and particulate matter reduction. Moving the greenhouse gas inventory program into a new agency will disrupt agency climate policy work, and impede staff communication and collaboration. The second is that greenhouse gas emissions are air pollution subject to the Clean Air Act. They are largely produced at the same time and from the same sources as the conventional air pollutants that DEQ regulates to protect Oregonians' health and our environment.



On a final note, I want to express appreciation from the local to the agency for hearing their concerns about contracting out positions in IT and the Environmental Data Management System program and updates. There has been a new focus and commitment to hiring and training staff and to include labor and management in thinking through the project. We are hopeful that the 7 limited duration positions for EDMS become permanent.

Thank you for the time and please let me know if you have any questions.