

Written Testimony HB 2007, Oregon 80th Oregon Legislative Assembly

To whom it may concern:

We are 7th-grade representatives from Harriet Tubman Middle School in Portland, Oregon. First, we would like to express our appreciation regarding efforts taken up by state lawmakers in reforming diesel emissions. Although young, we feel it is our right for our voices to be heard, especially since this legislation affects us and our peers so directly. We are writing today to support the passage of bill HB 2007, 80th Oregon Legislative Assembly-2019 Regular Session. This is a pressing issue for us because the current legislation limits our ability to be outdoors in a healthy environment due to the hazardous quality of the air surrounding our school. Since we attend Harriet Tubman, a comprehensive middle school, it is essential that we will be outside at some point during the day, be it for recess, while we are waiting for a ride home, or participating in P.E. activities. Just thirty feet from our front door, over 10,000 unregulated diesel engines pass by on the I-5 corridor each day. Our school administration cannot prevent our exposure to the harmful environment surrounding us while we learn.

Diesel particulates have a negative impact on everyone, especially adolescents. The effects of diesel pollution can cause significant health issues, including asthma, autism, lowered attention spans and decreased academic performance. This is concerning because the education of many students will continue to be negatively impacted by these circumstances, if this bill fails to pass. It isn't just our own safety in question, but that of our school's future students and surrounding communities. Due to current legislation, Oregon has been spending approximately 3 billion dollars annually on health issues related to the effects of diesel pollution. This money, in the future, can be redirected in ways that will improve funding toward providing better educational services.

This is more than statistics and numbers. We are concerned for our siblings, our friends, and communities statewide. No one wants their younger brothers and sisters to be exposed to damaging pollution. We want our loved ones to be happy and healthy. Diesel pollution is a serious issue that must be acknowledged. This bill passing would be a definite step in the right direction.

Respectfully,

Students of Harriet Tubman Middle School
Portland, Oregon