



April 2, 2019

**Washington County SUPPORTS HB 3408: Funding for Woodstove Exchange Program**

Dear Chair Helm, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for considering this testimony in support of House Bill 3408.

Fine particulate pollution, from sources like diesel engines and residential wood burning, contributes to health risks across Oregon. Fine particles in wood smoke are carried deep into the lungs, and can cause cancer and aggravate respiratory illnesses like asthma.

Not only are high levels of fine particulate pollution a threat to human health, it also has economic consequences for a region if a community is out of compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Violations of the federal standards anywhere in the Portland metro region can trigger restrictions on new industrial development in all three counties. Resources are needed to help communities address the health risks and avoid the economic consequences associated with fine particulate pollution caused by residential wood burning.

In response to high levels of fine particulate pollution during winter months, Washington County developed and implemented a wood stove exchange program in 2016 that has been successful in helping to reduce pollution levels. From the outset of our program, we determined that to maintain compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards, we needed to exchange 700 old wood burning stoves.

In the first 30 months, we have exchanged 333 old and polluting wood stoves for new and cleaner heat sources, including certified wood and pellet stoves, gas stoves, and electric heat pumps. The exchange of old wood stoves has helped to prevent 25 tons of particulate pollution from entering our airshed. Interest in our program remains high with a total of 564 applications received since the inception of the program.

Our ability to meet the goal of 700 old wood stoves exchanged is contingent on funding that supports grants and rebates for program participants, the development of communication and marketing materials, and working with partners throughout and across county borders.

Programs like ours, that provide grants and rebates, are an effective approach and have immediate impact on reducing ambient fine particulate pollution. Furthermore, grants and rebates help low-income households and fixed-income older adults transition away from inefficient and polluting wood stoves, improving the health and safety of their home environment.

**Board of County Commissioners**

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Many communities that struggle with fine particulate pollution lack sufficient resources to comprehensively address the problem, and state support for such efforts are essential to protecting the health and livelihood of communities across Oregon.

For all these reasons, Washington County strongly encourages the appropriation of \$500,000 to the Residential Solid Fuel Heating and Air Quality Improvement Fund.

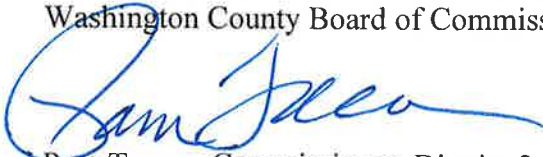
Sincerely,



Kathryn Harrington, Chair  
Washington County Board of Commissioners



Dick Schouten, Commissioner, District 1  
Washington County Board of Commissioners



Pam Treece, Commissioner, District 2  
Washington County Board of Commissioners



Roy Rogers, Commissioner, District 3  
Washington County Board of Commissioners



Jerry Willey, Commissioner, District 4  
Washington County Board of Commissioners