



ONTARIO

Senator Cliff Bentz
Representative Lynn Findley
VIA: email

Senator Bentz and Representative Findley:

I am very concerned about the impact that HB 2020 (Carbon Reduction) will have on the health and wellbeing of the community served by the Saint Alphonse Medical Center in Ontario.

Our rural hospital serves hundreds of patients each day, many that have limited incomes and have health coverage through either Oregon Medicaid or Medicare. In an effort to improve the health of our entire community our hospital is looking more at the impacts of factors outside of the four walls of the hospital to improve poor health outcomes (social determinates of health). An unintended consequence of HB 2020 may be to exacerbate two of the most significant social determinants of health in our community:

- Lack of stable employment
- Lack of reliable and accessible transportation

Based upon our most recent local community needs assessment, having stable employment is one of the most significant impacts on ones access to health care services. HB 2020 will negatively impact the prospect of keeping what limited jobs our area has due to the ability of industry and business to move their operations to Idaho and escape increased costs of energy. Reduced job prospects will result in decreased health outcomes and increased health care expenditures for our area.

HB 2020 will also increase the costs of transportation for members of our community with many traveling well over 30 miles to reach our hospital location. Increased transportation costs will result in fewer proactive health care clinic and screening visits resulting in an increase in negative health outcomes for those least able to afford it.

I appreciate your willingness to take these facts in to consideration as you determine how you will vote and ask that you share these views with others that may not understand the fragile balance of our economy and the social safety nets that will be disrupted by an increase in energy costs. I am hopeful that the unique nature of our community with its high poverty rates and location adjacent to a lower cost energy region such as Idaho allows for some flexibility in how HB 2020 if passed will be implemented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "KR Hart", with a long, sweeping underline.

Kenneth R. Hart, CPA
President
Saint Alphonse Medical Center Ontario