



February 12, 2020

TO: Joint Subcommittee On Natural Resources
RE: YES on SB 5702
FR: Mary Peveto, President, Neighbors for Clean Air

To: Chair Taylor and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment today in support of SB 5702, which seeks to ratify a fee increase for the Department of Environmental Qualities Vehicle Inspection Program (VIP). Neighbors for Clean Air is a grassroots advocacy organization that seeks to protect public health through the reduction of harmful air contaminants.

The VIP program has a long history of success and has been the most powerful tool employed to reduce harmful emissions associated with cars operated in some of our most populated areas such as the Portland Metro region. Unfortunately, we still have significant and growing air quality problems in this region, and the emissions from cars and trucks is Oregon's number one source of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It is critical that DEQ maintain this highly cost effective program which has accounted for a 20% decrease in motor vehicle pollution. This is more critical than ever as the federal government moves to weaken standards designed to protect public health.

Car exhaust is a mixture of pollutants (NO_x, Carbon Monoxide, and Particulate Matter) that cause/worsen respiratory disease and asthma. But there is a growing body of scientific evidence that levels of air pollution, even below federal NAAQS, causes irreparable damage, especially to our most vulnerable populations.

The evidence of damage to children from breathing dirty air has only increased and we now know that pollution from cars and trucks has a negative impact on brain development. A January 2019 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that students attending schools located near busy highways had lower rates of academic performance, higher absenteeism and higher rates of disciplinary problems than those attending less polluted schools. The more traffic on nearby roads, the larger the decline in scores on state standardized tests.¹

The agency is at a critical resource juncture to maintain this highly effective program, which 97% of customers rated as good or excellent. Without the fee increase it is expected to have to permanently cut staff and modify operations. These changes would most likely put the program on an unsustainable path to dissolution. I urge you to vote yes for the increases: yes for sustaining the strength of this program with a proven track record of providing cleaner air and healthier communities.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Mary S. Peveto'.

¹ <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25489>

