

**Testimony to the Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
On Senate Bill 5702**

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**Morgan Gratz-Weiser, Legislative Director  
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council supports SB 5702.

This bill would increase the fees that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) charges for vehicle inspections. DEQ provides critical services to Oregon's residents and businesses by implementing programs that ensure our water is safe drink, our air is clean to breathe, and that Oregon's natural resources—essential for a strong economy and quality of life—are protected. Increasing vehicle inspection program fees by a small amount will allow DEQ to maintain a strong vehicle inspection program for cars and light trucks in Portland and Medford area, keeping those areas in attainment of the federal Clean Air Act.

The vehicle inspection program continuously gets positive reviews from participants. It is well run, but has not had a fee increase in many years. As populations increase, it is important this program is able to keep pace with demand. An inspection program run by a state agency also avoids the built in conflict-of-interest of repair shops offering this service. Other states with fully privatized inspection programs have had incidences of fraud—both in overcharging customers for repairs not actually needed, or collecting fees without actually doing inspections and compromising air quality. More privatization would require more agency oversight and is not necessarily more efficient.

Failing to maintain a strong program has consequences. If this program does not operate effectively, air quality will deteriorate, which will require action to reduce air pollution from other sources, particularly industry. Allowing this program to become diminished may require business and industry to shoulder a greater burden to maintain air quality standards.

Finally, vehicles that are not operating cleanly emit local air toxics that are dangerous for human health. Cars and trucks operate near schools, playgrounds, daycare centers, homes, and businesses. Ensuring vehicles are properly maintained is important for public health. DEQ's program has resulted in a 20% reduction of harmful vehicle pollution.

Oregon Environmental Council urges you to pass SB 5702.