

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee,

I'm writing to strongly encourage you to support HB 2814 directing the Environmental Quality Commission to develop regulations to reduce indirect sources of diesel emissions.

Research indicates that the Portland metro area is at the 95th percentile nationally for exposure to diesel particulate matter pollution, and that much of this pollution is produced by the engines of non-road diesel equipment used at construction, rail, freight, and marine sites.

Research also indicates that Oregon's non-road diesel equipment fleet is significantly older than many other states. Because older engines emit much higher levels of particulate pollution -- including black carbon -- than newer engines, Oregon's non-road diesel fleet emits much higher average levels of pollution than many other states.

An extensive body of literature exists indicating that exposure to diesel particulate pollution is associated with elevated levels of circulatory, respiratory, neurological, and other problems, as well as cancer and premature death.

Individuals living in the Portland metro area experience elevated levels of all of the above health effects. Women during pregnancy, children, and the elderly are particularly vulnerable. In addition, individuals living in lower income and BIPOC communities are disproportionately affected, in part, because they often live within greater proximity to indirect sources of diesel pollution.

As indicated above, black carbon is a major component of diesel particulate emissions, and this is particularly true of non-road equipment with older engines. In addition to all the ways that particulates and black carbon can impair health, black carbon is a potent contributor to climate heating, and has "per unit of mass, a warming impact on climate that is 460 - 1,500 times stronger than CO2." Because black carbon stays in the atmosphere only days to weeks versus more than a hundred years for CO2, however, reducing black carbon provides a particularly effective and rapid opportunity to reduce the rate of global heating.
<https://www.ccacoalition.org/en/slcps/black-carbon>

House Bill 2814 is thus a triple winner. It reduces health impacts to exposed individuals, provides major environmental justice benefits to BIPOC communities, and provides rapid and significant reductions in Oregon's contributions to global heating. For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to support HB 2814.

Sincerely,

Joe Miller
Portland