

Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager

On House Bill 2488

House Committee on Energy and Environment

March 8, 2021



Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government for the greater Portland metropolitan area, tasked by Oregon statute with making decisions about how and where the region will grow. Our region has a strong track record of supporting the core purposes of Oregon's statewide planning system – protecting farms, forests and natural resources, including clean air and water, by facilitating efficient urban development to create vibrant communities served by a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system.

The Metro Council supports the intent of House Bill 2488 to ensure that planning decisions advance equity and environmental justice and spur action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In carrying out its responsibilities with respect to land use and transportation planning, the Metro Council places great emphasis on addressing both climate and equity. This is evident not only in the Council's 2021 legislative priorities, but also in a set of desired outcomes for successful communities that the Council adopted with broad regional support more than a decade ago – and in numerous actions the Council has taken since that time.

In recent years, in collaboration with our regional partners, we have, among other things:

- financially supported local efforts to make the most efficient use of our existing land
- adopted a 50-year plan for urban and rural reserves that will minimize unnecessary UGB expansions and maximize protections for resource land and important natural features
- adopted a strategic plan to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion that guides our internal operations as well as our work on regional policy and planning
- developed, and integrated into our regional transportation plan, the Climate Smart Strategy, which is intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation through both smart transportation planning and compact growth
- highlighted racial equity as a key principle woven throughout the regional transportation plan
- established new rules for UGB expansions that require cities to request an expansion, commit to annexation of expansion areas, develop concept plans to ensure that infrastructure will be provided and that expansions will result in needed housing, and allow “middle housing” types now allowed under HB 2001

We are also currently participating in the rulemaking led by the Department of Land Conservation and Development, which aims to implement Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-04 by reducing GHG emissions from transportation while centering racial equity.

We understand that major amendments to HB 2488 are forthcoming. We look forward to working with you and the bill's proponents to ensure that its provisions will support the efforts of our region and our state to advance climate action and environmental justice, and that these values, policies and actions are carried forward as integral priorities throughout Oregon's land use planning system.