

March 18, 2021

**Chair Beyer, Vice Chair Findley and members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SCR 17: An Environmental Justice Framework for Oregon.

I've lived, worked and played in Oregon my entire life. I have seen first hand the detrimental impacts that happens to our communities when environmental justice issues are ignored

I acknowledge that our State Legislature needs to do much more to address the urgent issues of environmental and climate justice in a timely fashion. A first step is agreeing to a statement of principles that set the bar for future action. The proposed resolution follows a valuable tradition of passing resolutions at times we must take first steps to right wrongs, i.e., the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

SCR 17 is important for all Oregonians because:

- This resolution recognizes that the lack of services and disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards faced by many communities in Oregon is a product of exclusion from and unequal access to decision-making processes.
- SCR 17 would help align the equity goals throughout the legislative and administrative branches of government, to

build a just, equitable, and resilient future for all Oregonians.

- As we have seen with the impacts of Covid-19, we need to invest in healthy food, renewable energy infrastructure, clean air and water, good jobs with a family-sustaining wage, and a range of workforce services and skills training.
- At the core of an equitable and sustainable society is environmental justice -- without clean air and water, without energy and goods that are produced without harming us, without stable climate and weather, our communities are cast into chaos. A framework of shared principles helps us achieve equity and sustainability.
- This resolution acknowledges that Oregon needs to move towards a regenerative economy that prioritizes community health protection, respects traditional ecological knowledge, and ensures the full and fair participation of Black, Native American, Indigenous and People of Color communities, essential workers, youth, low-income people and those who are most vulnerable in rural and urban communities in the decision-making process.

I urge you to vote yes on SCR 17. As Oregon takes on the monumental challenge of redressing these impacts, there should be a clear indication from the Legislature that the needs of historically and disproportionately impacted communities will be centered every step of the way. We must improve the public

health and well-being of all communities while directly tackling the climate crisis and environmental injustice.

It's the Oregon Way!

Sincerely,

***Todd D. Buchholz***