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Testimony on SCR 17

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

March 18, 2021

Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Our organizations represent the state's agricultural and forestry sector. We collectively represent well over \$3.5 billion in inputs into the state's economy and employ thousands of Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SCR 17. Recently, many agencies and sectors have had a rapidly growing interest in environmental justice considerations at both the state and federal level. In our sector, we also have seen environmental justice raised in recent public comments concerning water rights transactions, forest harvest, CAFO permits, among other issues.

We have welcomed the opportunity proactively engage in this conversation, particularly as it relates to the needs of Oregonians in our rural communities. We greatly appreciate the Governor's staff for being willing to engage in discussions around environmental justice funding needs, SB 286 and other issues during the session with our organization and with other regulated entities.

We have been notified that the intent of the SCR 17 is to establish a formal framework for environmental justice principles that will become a foundation for this work in Oregon. If implemented, this Joint Resolution will provide the state's policy position on environmental justice to guide future conversations. It is our understanding that the Resolution intent is to drive equity for BIPOC populations, rural communities, and other environmental justice communities.

After reviewing the Joint Environmental Justice Resolution, we are concerned that it's unclear how this framework will interact with the myriad of other environmental justice laws on the books as the other bills being contemplated this session. Currently, there are multiple environmental justice related bills in session. It is unclear if this framework supports other environmental justice bills in session or if they are independent of one another. There are also multiple definitions of environmental justice and other environmental justice related terminologies that can be problematic for the state

agencies to follow if they are all adopted legislatively and not reconciled with each other. Additionally, this resolution references the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF). The EJTF is also the primary component of the SB 286. If this Resolution and SB 286 were to pass, it is unclear how this Resolution may impact or alter SB 286.

We strongly urge the Legislature to ensure that the myriad of environmental justice bills under consideration this session are reconciled with each other so that we do not end up with conflicting or unclear definitions, mandates and goals around environmental justice that our agencies would then have to attempt to reconcile. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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