



TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS®

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March 29, 2021

House Committee on Energy and the Environment
Oregon House of Representatives
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Submitted Online

RE: Support House Bill 2488-2 Amendments

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

Tualatin Riverkeepers is a community-based organization that protects and restores the Tualatin River watershed. We build watershed stewardship through engagement, advocacy, restoration, access, and education. We are writing to request your support for HB 2488-2 to update the land use planning goals to address climate change and environmental justice.

Protection of our watershed includes being involved with local planning processes to ensure development works with nature instead of against it. To truly work with nature, it is important for a watershed to be climate resilient. Our watershed cannot begin to approach climate resiliency until climate change is included in the statewide planning goals. Additionally, our planning processes have historically not served communities of color and it is important to work to remedy the systemic environmental racism throughout our society with deliberate action at the legislative level. Additionally, historically marginalized communities feel the biggest impact from non-climate resilient policies, and disproportionately experience negative effects of our changing environment. If our State is to adequately confront the 21st Century challenges presented by the climate crisis and systemic environmental racism, then we need a 21st Century planning system that is up to the task. For that reason, we urge you to support HB 2488-2 —Equity and Climate in Land Use, to ensure that Oregon's land use planning system includes a comprehensive and rounded approach to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, equity, hazard risk reduction and environmental justice.

Although Oregon's land use planning system has long been a model for responsible and deliberate land use planning, it fails to explicitly consider climate change within any of the 19 statewide land use planning goals. This means that as of now local governments are planning for the future and are making critical decisions regarding comprehensive plans, urban growth boundaries, and urban and rural reserves without sufficient consideration (if any) of either the projected climate impacts of land use decisions within their jurisdiction or whether these decisions will help achieve Oregon's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. According to the

U.S. Global Change Research Program's Second State of the Carbon Cycle Report (2018), "Emissions from the urban built environment are directly shaped by societal factors, including regulations and policies governing land use, technologies such as transportation, and indirect factors such as demands for goods and services produced outside city boundaries."

Further, we know that the climate crisis did not emerge out of a vacuum: it is both a product of and exacerbates existing racial, social and socioeconomic inequities. Oregon's Native American governments and tribal communities, Black, Latinx and other people of color, as well as low income and under-resourced rural communities, have told us time and again that our current planning system simply does not serve them. Consultation and inclusion in land use decision-making processes is often inadequate and insufficient in scope. Pollution and environmental risks and hazards are far too often situated in the communities that can least afford and are least equipped to cope, while more privileged communities continue to have the ability to advocate loudly to avoid these environmental hazards, and have their concerns taken seriously.

Tualatin Riverkeepers' therefore strongly supports the passage of HB 2488-2 to update Oregon's Land Use Planning System to address climate change, environmental justice, and equity in the planning system in a holistic and integrated manner, which is the only way to prevent climate responses from reinforcing existing inequities. Oregon must address climate change and protect water and air for all of us, not just privileged communities. If we only focus on privileged communities when planning climate action any action we take will ultimately fail since water and air is all connected and does not respect town, city, and county boundaries.

We also urge the members of the House Committee on Energy and the Environment to indicate their support for the recommended budget of \$800,000 to both initiate and finish the adoption of a new Goal 20 for Equity and Climate in this biennium. There is positive forward movement in securing funding in that the Department of Land Conservation and Development included \$800,000 in Package 90 for Equity Initiatives as part of their proposed agency budget (see SB 5530). In addition, in order to provide adequate technical assistance to underserved rural communities and smaller cities and counties, a recommendation from the House Energy and Environment Committee for additional funding allocations would be appreciated.

HB 2488 will guarantee climate and equity-responsive land use planning by Oregon's local governments and ensure that Oregon is prepared for the unique challenges of this century.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Ashley Short
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