

Yesterday during the meeting several opponents spoke against HB 2488 stating that while equity is important, to support this bill is not the right time. But when is the right time? Oregon's history of exclusionary and racist land use policies are what have shaped our communities today. Was it the right time to redline neighborhoods, which a PSU study has found now the worst air quality and public health disparities? Here in Eugene-- was it the right time in 1939 to physically destroy and displace the first Black community to build the Ferry Street Bridge? Fast forward to today and that land is now one of Eugene's most beloved parks while descendants of this community live in some of the most industrial, toxic parts of town. Was the right time this past year when wildfires engulfed our state displacing over a tenth of our population but who were also disproportionately rural, low-income, Latino, and Indigenous? The forced disconnection between land and people is a highlight that HB 2488 strives to address through adding equity and climate action to Oregon's land use goals-- just as housing, economic development, and transportation, to name a few-- are incorporated and guide the DLC. House Bill 2488 aims to change that moving forward in land use policy decision making that will finally include all Oregonians, and start to redress some of the historic, racist practices we've seen in land use planning to-date.

HB 2488-2 is not only about requiring climate-smart land use planning, it establishes a system of inclusivity for affected communities and community members throughout the state. This gives vulnerable communities equal opportunities to decide how to address environmental and climate impacts and exercise their rights to have healthy environments in which to live, work, and play. This is also in line with Governor Kate Brown's Climate Action Executive Order, and her Economic Recovery Plan, and is further supported by established BIPOC organizations, such as the regional chapters of the NAACP. Many Oregonians, from community members like myself to our government leadership, recognizes the importance of addressing climate change and including equitable practices in planning. To support this bill is an act of restorative justice.