

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager  
In Support of House Bill 5517  
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
April 12, 2021**



Co-chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Subcommittee:

Metro is the elected regional government that serves nearly 1.7 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that includes land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, affordable housing and homeless services, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

As you know, transportation emissions are a significant source of air pollution and greenhouse gases. As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) responsible for transportation planning in the Portland region, Metro has collaborated for more than two decades with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on the implementation of strategies to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. While the region's current air quality is in overall compliance with federal standards, air monitoring in recent years has revealed that at times we are bumping up against or exceeding the standards, even apart from wildfire-related events. It is clear that more must be done to achieve our air quality goals, as well as the region's state-mandated greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The region's strategy for addressing transportation emissions relies on three factors: vehicle fuel economy, fuels, and vehicle miles traveled. Metro's focus has long been on reducing vehicle miles traveled through land use strategies that emphasize compact, walkable and transit-friendly development, as well as through development, in collaboration with our local and state partners, of a robust multimodal transportation network.

Meanwhile, DEQ is responsible for addressing clean fuels and (more to the point today) vehicle fuel economy. The Vehicle Inspection Program (VIP) plays a critical role in ensuring that individual vehicles run as clean as possible and achieve the best possible mileage, thereby minimizing both air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Metro has long relied on and continues to support DEQ's operation of the Vehicle Inspection Program to help the region achieve its clean air and climate goals. Most recently Metro served on the vehicle inspection fee increase advisory committee and supported the permanent fee increase and rules revision to allow DEQ to better serve the public and operate this very effective program.

This partnership has enabled the Portland region to remain in compliance with federal air quality requirements for more than two decades, while our per capita vehicle miles traveled have consistently remained lower than the national average. In turn, this has allowed the region to absorb significant population and economic growth while remaining in compliance with federal air quality standards.

Ratifying the modest and overdue VIP fee increase included in SB 5517 will enable DEQ to continue to support both public health and economic prosperity by ensuring that cars and trucks run cleaner and more efficiently and pollute less. We urge your support.