

12 April 2021

Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair Rayfield, and members of the Committee:

Multnomah County asks for your support of the Governor's 21-23 Recommended Budget for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). DEQ is a cornerstone public health agency that needs the funding proposed in the Governor's budget to perform the vital services Oregonians need to stay healthy and preserve the natural resources of the state for current and future generations. Moreover, DEQ ensures economic prosperity, not only by protecting public health and preserving the State's most important asset and competitive advantage, the quality, and beauty of our landscapes but also by ensuring fair and consistent application of environmental laws thus preserving regulatory certainty and stability for the industry.

While the County places our full support behind the entirety of the budget and the policy goals contained therein, we would like to draw your attention to our strong support for several key aspects of the budget, these include pops 90, 110, 111, 113, and 131.

Pop 90:

Pop 90 would establish an Office of Environmental Justice. This bill is arguably the most important effort in a generation to address environmental injustice in Oregon. In the face of a growing climate crisis, and historic inequities that have remained unaddressed

for too long, the State has a moral duty and practical interest in strengthening environmental justice statutes.

Pop 110:

Pop 110 would maintain the Vehicle Inspection Program. While this program only impacts two regions of the state, it arguably does more to preserve air quality than any other program. Maintaining fees to provide financial stability to this vital public service is a prudent action. Failure to do so could result in the loss of attainment for ozone that has been steadily increasing due to increased traffic and hotter summer weather. Nonattainment could mean severe restrictions imposed by the Federal EPA just at a time when the state is trying to recover from the economic crisis brought on by COVID-19.

Pop 111:

Pop 111 would help to fund climate programs at DEQ. It has been Multnomah County's long-standing policy to work to reduce greenhouse gases in our community. Our strategies have worked, and emissions have dropped to 18% below 1990 levels. But our progress has stalled, due in no small part to lack of Federal or state-level action. The Climate Protection Program and the Statewide Transportation Strategy are needed elements of a comprehensive response to the many and multiplying impacts of the climate crisis.

Pop 113:

Pop 113 would allow DEQ to fully implement HB 2007, the State's landmark legislation that will clean up dirty diesel trucks. With the passage of HB 2007, the legislature made Oregon only the second state in the country, after California, to regulate in-use diesel trucks. This funding is needed to implement the legislatively mandated retrofit program.

Pop 131:

Pop 131 would modernize Oregon's recycling system. Since the passage of the Bottle-Bill, Oregon has been a recycling leader. This program would cement that leadership.

Recycling markets have been thrown into a tailspin by changes to overseas markets. And the proliferation of consumer goods and packaging has led to consumer confusion on what can and can't be recycled. This program, born out of months of stakeholder engagement, offers a smart and balanced approach to align the recycling system with current best practices and 21st-century approaches.

In closing, Multnomah County strongly urges your support for the entirety of the DEQ funding package and offers our highest endorsement for the pops called out above.

These programs, when fully funded, will protect Oregonian's health, prosperity, and the State's natural resources. Multnomah County is eager to partner with the state and sees that these programs succeed.

Sincerely,



John Wasiutynski