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## **Testimony on SCR 17**

### **Senate Committee on Energy and Environment**

**May 5, 2021**

Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SCR 17. The resolution reflects a rapidly growing interest in environmental justice considerations at both the state and federal level. In our sector, we 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 understand 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 intent is to drive equity for BIPOC populations, rural communities, and other environmental justice communities. While we strongly believe in ensuring decisions made by state agencies are based on sound science and are fair to our communities, we have concerns about how this framework will interact with existing laws and the state's current approach to Environmental Justice.

It is 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). Reconstitution of the EJTF into the Environmental Justice Council is the primary component of the SB 286, which we closely engaged in. If this Resolution and SB 286 were to pass, it is unclear how this Resolution may impact SB 286. We understand that resolutions are not the same as policy bills, but this resolution seems to contain significant policy statements that have an unclear relationship with existing statutory provisions.

We strongly urge the Legislature to ensure that the myriad of environmental justice bills under consideration this session and already on the books 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.

Contact: Mary Anne Cooper, [maryanne@oregonfb.org](mailto:maryanne@oregonfb.org)