

**Testimony to the Housing Committee  
on House Bill 2558**

**February 25, 2021**

**Sara Wright, Transportation Program Director  
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council supports House Bill 2558.

We will not reach our climate goals in Oregon unless we direct growth into compact communities with lots of reliable alternatives to driving. This legislation would allow more people to live close to transit, giving Oregonians better choices about how to get around and also reducing climate and air pollution emissions.

This legislation will lift the ban on higher density housing in places where transit access is easy, allowing our communities to grow in a way that provides more opportunities to thrive. When people live close to their daily destinations and have lots of transportation options, we can significantly reduce climate pollution from everyday travel. Denser communities have other benefits, too. The air is cleaner, the costs of getting around are lower, it's easier to get exercise by walking and biking, they are cheaper to build and maintain, and—because they use less space—precious farm and forest lands are protected from sprawl.

Oregon Environmental Council has long advocated for thoughtful transit and land use planning. Every step we take to grow transit and housing together moves us closer to our climate and equity goals, and HB 2558 moves us in that direction.