

**Testimony to the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
on HB 4077**

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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 HB 4077**, the Environmental Justice for All bill, which is a common-sense solution to address complex, multi-issue equity and health challenges. We are a policy-focused, non-profit environmental group that works throughout Oregon, and believe that environmental stewardship and environmental justice are inseparable.

**An environmental justice map of Oregon that layers health related data, socioeconomic information, and environmental disparities to map patterns in neighborhoods and communities would be invaluable to health and environmental agencies and communities.** For example, when I worked on energy issues in front of the California Public Utilities Commission, I was able to utilize CalEnviroScreen to map environmental justice communities around a power plant. The map showed an 89% asthma rate overlaid with a pollution burden in the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile.<sup>1</sup> This data bolstered my advocacy and allowed me to demonstrate a holistic picture of the environmental and health disparities of the community I was advocating for.

The California Healthy Places Index (HPI)<sup>2</sup> map was subsequently developed to showcase data on economics, housing, and environment, which has helped assess factors that contribute to variations in regional and community life expectancy. Investing in health equity is good not only for individuals, but for communities and the state as a whole.

Similar tools in other states have been used to prioritize investments, resources, and programming in communities where health needs are greatest. According to HPI, state or local programs could use maps to identify geographic areas that need a particular kind of investment (like parks, housing, or transportation facilities) or that have been cumulatively disadvantaged by past policies and funding.

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<sup>1</sup> The City of Imperial, CA is home to the Otay Mesa Energy Center.  
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/11d2f52282a54ceebcac7428e6184203/page/Draft-CalEnviroScreen-4.0/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://map.healthyplacesindex.org/>.

We understand that investing in a tool like this takes time and resources. However, our growing state could strongly benefit from a skilled position that utilizes communications skills and STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) skills to act as a GIS mapping framework coordinator, in addition to a community engagement coordinator to gather input on solutions to the historic injustices suffered by disproportionately impacted communities across the state—and prevent new injustices from occurring. Staffing the Environmental Justice Council is equally important. The Environmental Justice Task Force has advised agencies for the last decade—based on community volunteer work and little staffing or analytical support—even as other advisory bodies have received resources and staffing. Now is the time to invest in environmental justice for the entire state of Oregon to complement the great equity work that lawmakers have been doing throughout the state.

Respectfully submitted,

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