



2/7/22

House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
Re: HB 4077 relating to Environmental Justice

Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share feedback on HB 4077, the Governor's Environmental Justice bill. This topic is important to the natural resource sector, and we are supportive of efforts to bring new investments and outreach to environmental justice communities in Oregon. We know that some of Oregon's rural communities will benefit from these efforts.

As initially drafted, our organizations had concerns with the bill, particularly the language directing use of the environmental justice mapping tool by Oregon state agencies. Our understanding of this tool is that it is intended to be informational only, to help prioritize areas in need of additional outreach and investments, and is not being developed for use in regulatory decisions. However, this was not clear in the language of the bill. We also want to ensure that the Council represents diverse perspectives, including those from natural resource industries.

We appreciate efforts by the Governor's office and her natural resource advisors to reach out and engage us in discussions about this bill and its language, and also efforts by Representative Owens to highlight areas of the bill that could be improved. These discussions have led to amendments which we hope will better clarify how the tool will be used by agencies (and how it will not be used), as well as expand representation by frontier and rural communities on the Council and in the process.

We look forward to reviewing the amendment and the additional clarity around the tool's informational purpose. We do still hope that certain aspects of the tool can be better clarified, including the types of data that will be included, how that data will be collected and interpreted, and protections against biases when data is acquired/entered into the tool or when data gaps are examined.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this important discussion, and thanks to the Governor and her staff for their willingness to engage around our primary concerns.