

Submitter: Morgan Schmidt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: HB4077

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, Vice-Chair Hudson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4077. My name is Rev. Morgan Schmidt, I live in Bend, and I am passionate about policy that pushes forward environmental justice for all Oregonians.

We live in an incredible place, and it's our responsibility to care for our air, lands, and waters in ways that center justice and equity. I'm writing to support HB 4077 because I know that in order to create and implement a just plan for the future of Oregon's environment, we need region-specific data and dedicated resources to continue bridging connections between state agencies and the public to raise concerns brought by environmental justice communities.

This work must be supported and elevated at a state level so that all Oregonians can thrive and enjoy a healthy, robust environment. We have a chance to invest in caring for communities who have been disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental decisions by implementing vulnerability mapping, while improving the health of all our communities together.

The Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) lacks adequate resources and the infrastructure necessary to continue their work within environmental justice communities. The EJTF has never had a real budget or designated staff person. It is difficult to determine the scope of environmental burdens and impacts on Oregon's environmental justice communities and most vulnerable communities because there is no cohesive and well-coordinated initiative to bring information on environmental justice parameters into one comprehensive and readily accessible structure.

We cannot afford to wait, and we cannot afford to skip this investment in environmental justice. Community members need the peace of mind that environmental justice advocates have the resources to make equitable and important decisions about the future of our communities. I urge you to pass HB 4077 to take this important step towards envisioning environmental justice for all in Oregon.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Morgan Schmidt