



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

February 9, 2022

House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Rep. Pam Marsh, Chair

Rep. Zach Hudson, Vice-Chair

Rep. David Brock Smith, Vice-Chair

RE: Testimony from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association in Support of HB 4077

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

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) supports the passage of HB 4077. OAPA is a nonprofit membership organization of over 800 planners that works to create sustainable and vibrant Oregon communities through professional development; advocacy for sound planning; providing resources to meet the challenges of growth and change; and embracing and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity.

While OAPA has interacted and appreciated the work done by the Environmental Justice Task Force to provide advice to state natural resource agencies, we have noted that it has been hampered by being underfunded and never staffed. HB 4077 rectifies this by renaming and reorganizing the Environmental Justice Task Force as the Environmental Justice Council (EJC), by providing staffing through the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and by expanding the capacity of Council.

OAPA supports that HB 4077 because it will do the following:

- It establishes the membership of the EJC, expecting expertise of members to include climate change/climate justice; environmental laws, regulations and standards; natural resources management; land use planning and development; sustainability; community organizing; and environmental health. OAPA values adding a youth member to the EJC.
- It expands the list of natural resources agencies to include all such state agencies.
- It defines “Environmental Justice Mapping” and requires DEQ and the Oregon Health Authority in consultation with the EJC to create an EJ mapping tool. This mapping tool is then to be used when natural resources state agencies develop policies, programs and administrative rules.
- It provides that EJC will, with state agencies, develop recommendations on public participation and engagement; consulting with environmental justice communities; establishing measure goals for reducing environmental disparities; and for identifying impacted communities to reduce health disparities.



A 2022 legislative priority for OAPA is to *promote equitable resiliency and recovery*. Oregon is facing unprecedented challenges – including the coronavirus pandemic, economic crisis, wildfires, and extreme weather events such as extreme heat – that require immediate and ongoing action to help communities prepare, recover, and rebuild. There is an increased urgency to ensure all Oregon’s communities can withstand and bounce back from natural hazards and other disasters, with an emphasis on minimizing vulnerability.

OAPA supports advancing environmental justice to address inequities and prioritizing vulnerable communities in recovery and resiliency strategies as HB 4077 does.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony supporting HB 4077.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Ray'.

Aaron Ray, AICP, President
Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eunice Kim'.

Eunice Kim, AICP, Chair
Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee