



February 15th, 2023

To: Representative Maxine Dexter, Chair, and Members House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Re: House Bill 2889

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lisa Arkin and I am the Executive Director of Beyond Toxics. Beyond Toxics uplifts voices from Oregon communities disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change. We collaborate with other nonprofits, educators, and tribal organizations to build a movement to demand that state and local policies require fair, inclusive, and equitable access to clean air, clean water, and safe spaces for all to live and work in. I am providing testimony on the HB 2889 -1 amendments.

We are glad that the HB 2889 -1 amendments reference the new environmental justice mapping tool currently being developed by the Environmental Justice Council. This mapping tool will help ensure environmentally just housing outcomes. The inclusion of climate resilience will ensure that when future homes are built, they need to be built to resist and adapt to adverse conditions of climate change or natural disasters. Both these additions take into account the existing environmental justice concerns of existing neighborhoods who've been impacted by air pollution or extreme heat.

Beyond Toxics has direct experience working in the Bethel neighborhood of West Eugene, where working class families have endured decades of harmful levels of air toxics from industrial and transportation pollution sources. Studies have shown that residents in West Eugene have higher rates of asthma and cancer than other neighborhoods in Eugene. Most of the modest homes lack air conditioning and air filtration systems, and don't protect people from exposure to air pollution. West Eugene has been identified for urban expansion and will support the next wave of new residential construction. We need Section 9 (1)(e) of the dash-1 amendment to make things better for families who will be moving to this area. The requirement to include environmental justice, climate resilience and equitable housing opportunities will ensure that new homes in West Eugene will be not only affordable, but will also protect residents from unhealthy air.

Supporting the -1 amendment ensures the state has the tools it needs to hold all parties accountable for their role in producing housing that is fair, just, and equitable. It can create long-term structural change and accelerate housing production while improving affordability and location choice. It can make communities in every corner of our state more resilient by ensuring they have safe and affordable housing. I urge you to move this critical piece of legislation to the House floor.

Sincerely,

Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics