

Susheela Jayapal



Multnomah County Commissioner, District 2

February 15, 2023

TO: House Committee on Climate Energy and Environment

RE: HB 2396, Indirect Source Rule

Good afternoon Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Levy and Levy, and members of the committee.

For the record my name is Susheela Jayapal and I represent North and Northeast Portland on the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners.

I am here today to urge your support for the passage of HB 2396.

In Multnomah County we have a simple, but I think profound, principle, **that everyone deserves to breathe clean air all the time.**

But, we won't have clean air in Multnomah County, or clean air for most Oregonians, until we address the issue of soot from older polluting diesel engines.

No matter where you live in the Portland Metro Area, you live in a diesel hot-spot, exposed at rates many times what the state considers to be an acceptable level of exposure.

This is especially true for anyone who lives near a highway, the airport, in North Portland close to industrial and Port facilities, or anyone who lives close to a rail yard or construction site.

All of this is to say that the distribution of diesel pollution, while bad for everyone, is worse for some.

DEQ and County data make it clear, diesel emissions disproportionately impact Black and brown people.

Areas of the County with the highest proportion of Latinx or Black individuals were exposed to 2.5 to 3 times the amount of diesel Particulate Matter, respectively, as other parts of the County.

This is shocking and heartbreaking.... especially when you consider that the entire urban metro area is a diesel PM hotspot.

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Researchers have found that Black Oregonians are exposed to nitrogen dioxide, or NO₂, another toxic byproduct of diesel combustion, at concentrations about 40% higher than those experienced by white Oregonians.

These outcomes are the result of policies and decision making that put freeways through Black neighborhoods, and sited rail and freight facilities in poor communities where people of color live.

That is called environmental racism

And now, more than a decade after it was demonstrated just how bad the problem is, the legislature has the opportunity to address this problem head on, to adopt approaches that have been shown to work, to actually clean up the air in communities that are the most impacted.

The focus on **indirect sources** is so critical because more than 70% of diesel particulate in the Portland Metro area can be attributed to these sources - construction sites, distribution centers, railyards and marine ports - places that attract the trucks, trains, and machinery that are the direct sources of diesel pollution.

Now is a time for reckoning with this reality in service to the health of our communities.

HB 2396 will create a flexible regulatory framework for addressing mobile source diesel emissions at the largest most polluting facilities. .

This legislation will disproportionately benefit people of color, because people of color are disproportionately burdened by diesel pollution; but this is not only a Black or brown problem.

Diesel pollution burdens millions of Oregonians, and passing HB 2396 will clean up the air for everyone; it will leave everyone better off.

Most of us don't get to choose where we can afford to live or send our kids to school, and as a consequence we don't get to choose the quality of the air we breathe.

That's why this legislation is needed, because it will get us to that place where we all get to breathe clean air, no matter where we live.

Thank you.