

March 6, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Neron and honorable members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Michael Heumann, and I reside in the Cully Neighborhood of Portland. I am here to speak in favor of SB-414 (and SB-426), addressing indoor air quality in schools.

I am speaking today for myself, as a retired Epidemiologist, who for 27 years was responsible for the Environmental and Occupational public health of all Oregonians, while I worked at the Oregon Health Authority.

I am also here representing MACG (Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good). **MACG is an alliance of faith, labor, health education and community organizations in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas Counties. Our 22-member institutions are dedicated to building a base of everyday civic leaders to effectively stand for the change they want to see in their communities. We organize people power to create a better region for all.**

Every school day, students and school employees enter the doors of our educational institutions across the state, and in too many instances, spend their day breathing air polluted with residues of toxic chemicals, mold, viruses, bacteria, pesticide, motor vehicle exhaust pollution, and more. During my tenure at the Oregon Health Authority I responded to numerous reports of incidents of illness and exposures among staff and students to these kinds of contamination in urban, suburban and rural school settings. Our investigations regularly found exceedances of established safety guidelines occurring in schools in wealthy and lower income neighborhoods.

Because there were (and still are) no strong and consistently enforceable regulations and guidance for these non-industrial settings, we found it difficult to prevent repeated instances from happening again in a month or a year. We faced angry and concerned parents and staff, and found little support from other governmental agencies that had varying jurisdictions over the contaminants or the physical settings – because they were beyond the usual places where these substances were found.

At last, with HB-3031 we may be reaching the point where the tools (and resources needed to implement them) become available to proactively detect and more effectively respond to hazardous conditions in school settings before they rise to levels that cause harm to health and disrupt the important work of educating our children. I urge you to pass HB-3031 and send on to become law. This is long overdue and you have the opportunity to make it happen.

Thank you,

Michael Heumann, MPH, MA