

TO: Chair Bynum and Members of the House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

FR: Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics  
Teryn Yazdani, Staff Attorney & Climate Policy Manager, Beyond Toxics

DT: March 31, 2023

RE: Written Testimony in Support of HB 3349-1

Dear Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Beyond Toxics, a state-wide environmental justice nonprofit, and the communities we serve across the state, we are writing to express support for the -1 amendment to HB 3449 which would create a “funding readiness hub.” We believe it is important to have a “hub” capable of helping community-based organizations working in consultation with Oregon’s Regional Solutions team to assist in bringing federal grant dollars down to vulnerable communities.

Beyond Toxics has been an active public interest participant in policy decisions related to public well-being and environmental justice for over twenty years. We are deeply invested in climate policies that promote climate readiness and resiliency. Further, many aspects of our work relate to a just transition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality and climate impacts for Oregon’s most vulnerable populations. We, therefore, support HB 3349-1, which will provide support to access federal funding that will strengthen our communities.

Climate change is already producing devastating impacts in Oregon, and the destruction caused by recent climate-influenced weather events and natural disasters, such as wildfires, droughts, and unprecedented heat waves, have price tags in the billions of dollars. These ever-worsening climate impacts across the state have made clearer than ever the need to bolster and protect Oregon communities on the frontline of climate impacts, particular communities facing drought and wildfire risks.

For example, Beyond Toxics is working on the Bethel Clean Energy project which supports a working class, vulnerable community to learn about, make decisions and pursue beneficial clean energy technology. The outcome of the project will be a feasibility study of community involvement in decision-making about renewable and affordable energy systems to improve climate resilience, health and property value. This is an exciting project that could serve as a model for other communities. We hope the establishment of a funding readiness hub would provide efficient, equitable and timely resources so that disadvantaged communities like Bethel, as well as the rural communities in Lane County, don’t miss out on opportunities to fund infrastructure improvements.

Thank you for this opportunity and for your time. Please support and pass HB 3349-1 for Oregon’s communities and climate preparedness.

Sincerely,

Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics

Teryn Yazdani, Staff Attorney & Climate Policy Manager, Beyond Toxics

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