

February 13, 2024

FROM: Jonathan Harker, AICP (SD #23)

TO: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Senator Janeen Sollman, Chair  
Senator Lynn Findley, Co-Chair

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 1559 - Updating Oregon's GHG Emission Reduction Goals.

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1559 related to updating Oregon's GHG emission reduction goals.

I am testifying today as a retired city land use planner with 35 years of experience in city land use planning. At retirement I was the City of Gresham's Urban Design & Planning Director. Since retirement I have continued to be active in land use planning issues especially related to climate change and equity. Recently I served as a member of DLCD's Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CEFC) Rules Advisory Committee. I am also testifying as the grandparent of a 28-month old grandson and 16-month old granddaughter.

The litany of how climate change is impacting Oregonians is well known but worth repeating: extreme heat; droughts; heavy rains and flooding; wild fires; sea rise; slope instability, downed trees and changes to vegetation zones among other impacts. These impacts Oregon is experiencing today will only increase without urgent action to reduce GHG emissions.

As a planner I know that value of setting goals to achieve, often decades out, that when achieved, result in a better quality of life for our communities. SB 1559 uses best science practices to update Oregon 2007 GHG emission reduction goals. It will replace the current 2010 and 2030 interim goals with updated goals for 2030 and 2040. The near-term actions to reduce GHG emissions to meet the interim goals will improve air quality and health outcomes providing community health and economic benefits. And it will update the 2050 goal and set an aspirational goal to achieve net-zero no later than 2050.

The goals that SB 1559 will set are a necessary aspect of the actions Oregon needs to take if my grandchildren and their peers are to prosper in living their lives as I have in living mine.

Thank your for attention.