



TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS.

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MEASURE: HB 1512A
EXHIBIT: 3
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SUBMITTED BY: Sue Marshall

February 22, 2012

Co-Chair Bailey and Co-Chair Gilliam
House Energy, Environment and Water Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301.

RE: Tualatin Riverkeepers Supports SB 1512

Dear Co-Chair Bailey, Co-Chair Gilliam and Committee Members,

According to the National Institutes of Health:

Elemental (metallic) mercury and all of its compounds are toxic, exposure to excessive levels can permanently damage or fatally injure the brain and kidneys. Elemental mercury can also be absorbed through the skin and cause allergic reactions. Ingestion of inorganic mercury compounds can cause severe renal and gastrointestinal damage. Organic compounds of mercury such as methyl mercury are considered the most toxic forms of the element. Exposures to very small amounts of these compounds can result in devastating neurological damage and death. For fetuses, infants and children, the primary health effects of mercury are on neurological development. Even low levels of mercury exposure such as result from mother's consumption methyl mercury in dietary sources can adversely affect the brain and nervous system. Impacts on memory, attention, language and other skills have been found in children exposed to moderate levels in the womb.

When mercury enters bodies of water, biological processes transform it to methyl mercury, a highly toxic and bioaccumulative form. Fish can absorb methyl mercury from their food and directly from water as it passes over their gills.

For all of these reasons, we need to reduce the amount mercury released into the environment.

The state of Washington has already recognized four major manufacturers of fluorescent lamps as meeting the standards in SB 1512. Because of the ready availability of low-mercury fluorescent lamps, we see no economic hardship for retailers or consumers caused by this legislation. This is a small but important way to reduce the exposure of Oregonians to a significant health risk. **We urge your support for SB 1512.**

Sincerely,

Brian Wegener
Tualatin Riverkeeper