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City of Portland, Oregon



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY OF PORTLAND

working for clean rivers



February 21, 2019

Senator Taylor, Co-Chair & Representative Reardon, Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE, HR 174
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HB 5017 – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Budget

Dear Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Joint Subcommittee,

The City of Portland supports the following packages in the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) budget that will help the agency improve air quality, reduce the permitting backlog, plan for and respond to hazards, and apply an equity lens to the agency's activities.

Emissions of airborne toxics threaten public health in Oregon, and particularly for vulnerable communities. Protection of public health requires a focus on risk- and science-based approaches to air toxics permitting and reduction of local concentrations of air toxics. The City supports investments that improve and protect air quality for all Oregonians:

- POP 114: Reduce Wood Smoke Pollution
- POP 116: Air Quality Permitting Backlog
- POP 118: Maintain Vehicle Inspection
- POP 119: Implement Air Toxics Permitting Program

A March 2018 fire at an improperly-permitted Portland car and tire scrapyards sent a toxic smoke plume into the surrounding neighborhood. Over 3,000 residents were advised to evacuate the area, which included a large non-English speaking population and many low-income residents. Several packages in DEQ's budget will help the agency plan for and respond to hazards. Funding these packages will meaningfully increase DEQ's planning and response capabilities for hazardous materials and help prevent human-caused hazards:

- POP 132: Maintain and Enhance Oil Spill Prevention
- POP 133: Safe Transport of Hazardous Materials by Rail
- POP 134: Statewide Emergency Spill Response and Preparedness

The City of Portland supports a position at DEQ to improve how the agency considers historically underserved and vulnerable populations in all activities:

- POP 144: Environmental Justice and Title VI Coordinator

In addition to the above packages, the City of Portland supports a reasonable dedication of additional resources for water quality permits, Total Maximum Daily Loads, and water quality standards. This is critical for DEQ to fulfill its commitment to public health and water quality, while limiting rate increases to what is affordable for local communities. These programs are necessary to ensure industrial and municipal sources of water pollution are appropriately regulated through permits and inspections, protecting the health of Oregonians and the environment.

DEQ is a key partner in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing Portland's air, land, and water quality. The City of Portland urges your support for the above packages in DEQ's budget. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Joe Zehnder
Interim Director, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
City of Portland



Courtney Patterson
Interim Director, Bureau of Emergency Management
City of Portland



Michael Jordan
Director, Bureau of Environmental Services
City of Portland