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In Support of HB 2020

On Behalf of **Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices**

To Chair and Members of Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction:

I serve on the board of directors of Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices, a non-profit, faith-based, education and advocacy organization that promotes policies and laws that protect the common good, particularly for Oregon's most vulnerable populations. As people of faith we advocate for issues of social justice and economic fairness. We also call for stewardship of God's creation, especially in the face of destabilizing climate change.

Why are faith groups concerned about the renewable energy and climate provisions of HB 2020? Because the Oregonians most impacted by climate change are:

- those who live in poverty and are already on the margins of society.
- people who live near trucking routes, or adjacent to rail lines, or in industrial neighborhoods with poor air quality, whose children have the highest rates of asthma.
- fisherman whose livelihoods are adversely impacted by shellfish decimated by ocean acidification, and migrating ocean fish seeking cooler ocean temperatures.
- rural residents whose homes, health and livelihoods are impacted by wildfires.

OCCV supports the provisions of HB 2020 to aid the following communities:

(a) Areas with above average concentrations of low-income households, historically disadvantaged households, high unemployment, high linguistic isolation, low levels of homeownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations or residents with low levels of educational attainment.

(b) Areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure or environmental degradation.

HB 2020 is the best opportunity we have in Oregon to hold accountable Oregon's biggest polluters and those with the greatest carbon footprint. Our major concerns with the bill as written are:

- Exemptions are excessive, reducing the investment pool to the point that minorities, people of color, rural communities and the working poor may get limited benefit.
- Waste incineration is deemed renewable energy, despite the fact that under the Cleaner Air Oregon rules Covanta Marion is one of 20 industrial sites currently under review by DEQ for health risks posed by the incinerator's reported toxic air emissions. Such a facility should not be considered a renewable energy source, like solar or wind energy, a designation that removes Covanta Marion from the Clean Energy Jobs cap.

Covanta's air toxic pollution is also an Environmental Justice issue because of community reports that air toxics and drifting ash negatively and disproportionately harm downwind communities. According to the US EPA, the neighborhoods within a 7-mile radius around the Covanta waste incineration facility are in the 88th percentile for cancer and respiratory risks

(using National Air Toxics Assessment data). Furthermore the US EPA lists the area's demographics indicators for minority (86th percentile), low-income (70th percentile) and linguistically isolated populations (88th percentile) for an overall Demographic Index in the 83rd percentile compared to other areas in Oregon. Covanta is a contributing factor to the health risks endured by the surrounding community.

The recent decision by Metro to not send 200,000 tons per year of its waste to the Covanta Marion incinerator was partly due to environmental justice concerns that toxic emissions might affect minority populations and inordinately impact the very young and the elderly.

OCCV believes this is an issue of social, economic and environmental justice. We recommend passage of HB 2020 with fewer industrial exemptions, including no exemption for Covanta Marion, which should not qualify as a clean, renewable energy source.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Andy Harris, MD
Board of Directors
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices