



From: Janaira Ramirez, Coalition Organizer
Re: House Bill 2007

Date: March 19, 2019

Dear Chairman Helm, Vice Chair Reschke, Vice Chair Schouten and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing testimony. My name is Janaira Ramirez and I am the Coalition Organizer for the Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA). OJTA is a network of base-building, frontline-led organizations who came together to envision and advocate for a just transition to a regenerative economy, centering the voices of the communities who are most impacted by environmental racism, economic exploitation, and climate change.

A just transition must ensure the right to clean, breathable air for workers, families, and everyone. Such a transition begins by addressing the sources of bad air quality and ending them. HB 2007 takes meaningful steps toward this goal. We feel the bill could be strengthened and have introduced amendments endorsed by the OJTA Clean Air Workgroup and allies. We ask you to consider strengthening the bill by following the leadership of frontline communities.

OJTA members and allies have met regularly this session to discuss and ensure that HB 2007 adequately addresses the health and environmental impacts our communities experience and protects the right to clean, breathable air for all those who call Oregon their home. Our coalition work demonstrates our responsibility to each other and to every Oregonian, and our collective commitment to protect the sacred air we breathe. Diesel exhaust not only has immediate negative health effects like lung and throat irritation, but prolonged exposure also leads to asthma, lowers our body's ability to fight respiratory infections, harms delicate lung tissue, and is linked to various forms of cancer.

In my home city of New York, as in cities across Oregon, the highest concentration of diesel pollution is found in low-income earning, Black and Latino neighborhoods due to the presence of many highways and construction projects. The pediatric asthma rate in the one New York borough with the highest concentration of Black and Latino populations exceeds the national rate and is the leading cause of school absences and hospitalization. Portland, home to the largest student population in the state, has some of the worst graduation rates in the country, as well as worse diesel pollution buildup due to our geography and lax regulations. The reality is this isn't just a problem in New York, but everywhere in our state and our country that is overexposed to these dirty diesel engines' exhaust.

In order to protect vulnerable children, workers, elders, and many Oregon families, we must phase out old diesel engines, beginning in areas with highest exposure. We cannot allow for these engines to be reintroduced into the operating cycle. Breathable air means good and healthy air quality that does not cut our lives short, cause irreversible health effects, or take youth out of school and into hospitals where

families must then bear the emotional and financial burden of hospitalization. We support strong amendments to HB 2007 to ensure Oregon's youth and families can live long healthy lives.

Thank you.

Janaira Ramirez
Coalition Organizer