

Attn: Chair Ken Helm, Vice Chair E. Werner Reschke, and Vice Chair Sheri Schouten

March 18, 2019

HB 2007 – Public Testimony

My name is Beven Byrnes. I am a life-time Portland resident where I am raising my four daughters. I'm the Principal of Bridges Middle School in downtown Portland, a nonprofit school serving students with learning differences, like ADD/ADHD, Autism and Dyslexia. I'm also a spokesperson and volunteer coordinator for Portland Clean Air and Portland Neighbors for Diesel Action (PNDA). Through this work, I stay in regular communication with over 35 neighborhood associations across Portland about air quality issues.

The time to pass a strong bill that truly protects public health and Oregonians from diesel pollution is long overdue, and I extend a heartfelt thank you to Representatives Kotek, Power, Nosse, (and Senators Dembrow, Frederick, and Taylor) for their leadership on addressing this urgent health crisis. HB 2007 is an important step forward. And I thank you all for your time and efforts to make this bill a strong and effective measure. And—there is room for substantial improvement in the bill as currently written.

While I agree with this bill in general—and I am pleased to see that it will allow local governments to adopt anti-idling regulations for commercial vehicles, repealing the current state preemption—it can and should be much stronger and more effective. We CANNOT wait any longer for Oregon to clean up its Diesel problem. Exposure to diesel engine exhaust causes cancer; increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, and cardiovascular disease, exacerbates asthma and can lead to low-weight and preterm births. Children are especially vulnerable because their lungs are still in the developmental phase and they breathe, on average, 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults do. There is also a growing body of evidence linking traffic-related air pollution, including diesel exhaust, to neurodevelopmental disorders like Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Something of particular interest to me and the families at my school.*

Pollution from diesel engines is deadly, and diesel pollution is presently at unhealthy concentrations throughout the state. The particulate monitors at my school, used by my students and I to research air pollution and take action to make effective change, regularly register PM 2.5 and PM 1.0 particulates at 20 – 50 micrograms/cubic meter (with frequent peaks up to 75, at time even higher). This is 200 – 500 times the Oregon health benchmark for PM 2.5...which is 33 times weaker than California's.

The levels of diesel pollution in Oregon result in significant public health impacts, including Over 400 premature deaths and Over 25,000 work loss days each year. The monetized value of health impacts in Oregon exceeds \$3 billion annually. This is truly a health crisis of gigantic proportions. Now is the time to take immediate action.

I am here today to respectfully request your consideration on the following amendments to make HB 2007 stronger.

1. We CANNOT wait until 2029 for the phase-in schedule. We should be following California's 2023 deadline for compliance. And, we MUST ensure the phase-in schedule prioritizes implementation in the areas of greatest concern (where the most sensitive populations live, where there is the greatest pollution, and where the most people are exposed).

2. The bill directs the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) to adopt diesel engine emission standards for medium-duty and heavy-duty trucks and buses. This commission MUST include at least one medical expert who is well versed in the many negative—and deadly— health impacts of diesel pollution. This requirement should be clearly outlined in the language of the bill.
3. You MUST close the loophole on (“glider”) trucks. We want to ensure old engines are held to the same standard as all engines of the same model year—even if old engines are put into new truck bodies.
4. In order to be effective, this bill MUST incorporate a sticker registration program for all engines, ensuring trucks demonstrate continuing compliance with the applicable emissions standards for their engine model years.
5. The bill mandates that any public improvement project funded by state bonds of \$20 million or more, at least 80% of the vehicles and equipment used on the construction site must be powered by clean diesel engines. In developing the rules for these contract specifications, the EQC MUST consider how to assist disadvantaged business enterprises, minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and businesses owned by service-disabled veterans.

We need to act immediately. It is time for our legislators in the state to consider the impact that diesel has on their constituents’ health and act accordingly. We can no longer afford to just consider the economics of legislative measures, while turning a blind eye to the serious health issues that Diesel poses.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on this important issue.

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As one of the few schools in Oregon devoted to students with learning differences and the only one focused exclusively on middle school, Bridges offers its 5th through 8th grade students small class sizes, differentiated instruction, and a safe place to learn and grow.