



Vehicle Inspection Keeps Oregon Green - Please Pass SB 5702

DEQ's Vehicle Inspection workers do more than deliver cost-effective service – they deliver clean air.

Dear Co-chairs Reardon and Taylor and members of the Joint Ways and Means subcommittee on Natural Resources,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 5702, the Vehicle Inspection Program fee increase. Oregon AFSCME Council 75 represents nearly 27,000 employees in the state in both public and private sectors. This includes members working as good stewards of our state's resources financially and environmentally at the local and state level including Local 3336, the Department of Environmental Quality.

The DEQ employees provide for effective customer service.

The results speak for themselves. DEQ VIP employees generate a 97% positive customer service rating and the average wait to complete a vehicle test is 10 minutes. In those 10 minutes, customers can renew their vehicle's registration and get their tags right then and there. Customers pay only for the certificate of compliance. An inspector will run the test on a vehicle for no charge if the customer wants to see if their latest repair fixed a problem.

The Vehicle Inspection Program is cost effective and trustworthy services.

The Environmental Protection Agency gives more pollution reduction credit to public vehicle inspection programs because they are less susceptible to fraud than privatized or contracted out programs. We need to look no further than the 2015 Volkswagen scandal to see how cheating on environmental regulations harms consumers. DEQ's vehicle inspection workers have the training and expertise to perform the emission tests, calibrate and troubleshoot equipment, and explain test results.

Funded entirely by the certification fee which hasn't been raised in 22 years, DEQ's Vehicle Inspection Program does not take a dime from the General Fund.

DEQ's cost-effectiveness study, which the Legislative Fiscal Office accepted, assessed the fees and services of more than 30 vehicle inspection programs across the country. That study revealed that inspection fees in public programs are approximately one-third the fees of privately run programs. And DEQ's additional services such as free retesting and providing vehicle registration tags make that biannual fee even more cost-effective.

The Vehicle Inspection Program has provided clear results in pollution reduction - an important public health preventative measure and a trusted accountability measure to ensure vehicle pollution control systems are working properly. Burning fossil fuel in combustion engines is a dirty business, even after three decades of regulated fuel content, efficiency standards, and emission controls. While newer cars have pollution control systems, without inspection and maintenance, roughly one in five of those systems are likely to be faulty, spewing up to four times the smog-forming pollutants of a properly functioning system. People with asthma, people who work outside, and



children are particularly vulnerable to these air pollutants. By requiring the maintenance of emission control systems, the Vehicle Inspection Program reduces smog-forming pollutants and air toxins in Portland, Metro area and Medford by tens to hundreds of tons every year.

It is difficult to believe that there is any private contractor out there that could perform tests to federal standards, be free from ethical conflicts of interest, pay workers a fair wage and benefits, could produce a 20% reduction in pollution, continually innovate to produce conveniences for motorists, and not raise its fee for 22 years.

Please continue the investment in the Vehicle Inspection Program's proven cost-effective, public health and environmental protections by passing SB 5702 and allowing DEQ to increase their fees.

Respectfully submitted by

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