

To Committee Members, House Bill 2560

I've attended and testified in hearings in Boston and in Salem for fifty years. If the pandemic leave us with anything positive it is realizing that government can run well and democratically without citizens having to drive many miles, wait in corridors or lobbies to attend sessions that are delayed or cancelled, and pack into airless rooms with lobbyists lining the walls three deep. This bill seems eminently sensible. People who feel strongly and can manage transportation and time will still attend, but others who have something to contribute can still witness the back and forth discussion (of which there has not been enough in the hearings I've attended) and participate without concern about their ability to speak or compose themselves in public.

Of course this could lead to many more written submissions, but committees could provide guidance as they do for verbal testimony. Ability to participate electronically may actually encourage a broader range of perspectives, and ideas. Please give this bill serious consideration and move it along in the process.

Wesley Ward, Portland.