

Testimony to the House Committee on Energy & Environment on House Bill 2814

March 3, 2021

**Jamie Pang South, Environmental Health Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

OEC supports HB 2815, which directs the Environmental Quality Commission to establish an indirect source review program to regulate the aggregate emissions from indirect sources, such as diesel construction equipment and other nonroad vehicles.¹

In 2019, OEC was part of a petition to the Environmental Quality Commission to take action on indirect sources that generate large amounts of pollution. Our desire to curb Oregon's diesel pollution has not changed and if anything, our concern for respiratory and lung health has only grown as the COVID-19 pandemic developed. Diesel pollution has both negative health and climate consequences. Diesel exhaust was classified as a known human carcinogen in 2012 by the International Association for Research on Cancer. Yet, 90% of Oregonians today reside in areas where diesel exhaust exceeds the health benchmarks for cancer risk.²

2019 data shows that almost 50% of all global deaths by air pollution are caused by diesel emissions.³ Locally, diesel exhaust prematurely kills 460 Oregonians, causes over 140 heart attacks, and costs the state \$3.5 billion in lost work days, hospital visits, and medical illnesses every year.⁴ DEQ projects that reducing diesel emissions could save over \$1.6 billion in avoidable public health impacts, including treatment for illness, hospitalizations, lost work days and premature deaths every year, in Oregon.

Further, diesel pollution is an occupational hazard. Lung cancer risks amongst truck drivers, railroad workers, and heavy-equipment operators were found to be 40% higher

¹ See Green Energy Institute et. al., Petition to Promulgate Indirect Source Rules (Dec. 20, 2019).

² Oregon Environmental Council, *Dirt on Diesel Report* (2016) at p. 4, available at https://oeconline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Diesel_2016.pdf.

³ International Council on Clean Transport and Climate and Clean Air Coalition, *A Global Snapshot of the Air Pollution-Related Health Impacts of Transportation Sector Emissions in 2010 and 2015* (pub. 2019), available at <https://www.ccacoalition.org/en/resources/global-snapshot-air-pollution-related-health-impacts-transportation-sector-emissions-2010>

⁴ 2016 OEC *Dirt on Diesel Report*; DEQ, *Concerns About Diesel Engine Exhaust* (revised 2015) at p. 7, available at <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/DieselEffectsReport.pdf>; Multnomah County, *Diesel Pollution: Bad for Oregon's Health* (Jan. 2019), available at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/brfs/article/733313>.

than the average population.⁵ Reducing emissions from places like railyards, construction sites, marine terminals, and ports through an indirect source rule would therefore significantly support a healthier Oregon workforce.

HB 2007 from the 2019 legislative session, while referred to as “the diesel bill” only covered on-road medium and heavy-duty vehicles registered within the tri-county metro region. Off-road sources like construction sites are considered “indirect sources” and are not included in HB 2007. HB 2815 is an opportunity to direct DEQ to start accounting for the emissions from these indirect sources and help reduce pollution across the state.

⁵ State of California. (1998). Part B: Health Risk Assessment for Diesel Exhaust. California Environmental Protection Agency. http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/dieseltac/part_b.pdf; *See also* Lung Cancer and Vehicle Exhaust in Trucking Industry Workers, *Environ Health Perspect*. 2008 Oct; 116(10): 1327–1332, *available at* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2569090/>.