



Health Department

March 4, 2021

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE - Remote B
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 289 - Relating to environmental equity

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley, and members of the Committee, my name is Charlene McGee and I am the REACH Program Manager for Multnomah County Health Department. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB289.

REACH stands for Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health, a program within the Multnomah County Health Department focused on promoting health in the Black community of Multnomah County. One of our focus areas is promoting regular physical activity, which improves overall health and quality of life; and helps reduce risk of many chronic conditions, including leading causes of death such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. These conditions often disproportionately affect Black and African American members of our community.

In our work, including our recently released report: Multnomah County REACH Transportation Crash and Safety Report: At the Intersection of Transportation, Health, Race and Justice, we find that unsafe public spaces create barriers to physical activity, and therefore a barrier to avoiding preventable diseases and premature deaths. SB289 would help reduce these barriers by creating stronger deterrents against bias crime and by removing known offenders from public recreation areas. Maintaining these areas as safe spaces for all is critical to preventing chronic disease.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Charlene McGee
REACH Program Manager
Multnomah County Health Department