



# Oregon Public Health Association

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[www.OregonPublicHealth.org](http://www.OregonPublicHealth.org)

March 8, 2021

Chairwoman Marsh,

Oregon Public Health Association urges members of the House Energy and Environment Committee to resoundingly support House Bill 2488-1, Relating to Addressing Climate Justice through Land Use Planning; Declaring an Emergency.

Climate change is a public health threat in Oregon. Oregon Public Health Association has over 560 members, which includes more than 20 organizations, in nearly every county in the state. We are public health professionals representing all components of our public health system: doctors, nurses, dentists, researchers, professors, students, community leaders, governmental public health professionals, and citizens who are committed to improving the health of every Oregonian.

Our organization supports HB 2488-1 because we know that climate and human health and well-being are significantly interconnected. Human health has always been influenced by climate and weather. A changing and unpredictable climate poses myriad risks to health, from heat stress to asthma attacks caused by wildfire smoke to the increased prevalence of displacement and houselessness due to floods, fires, and rising sea levels. We all know that many Oregon communities already are experiencing some of these health impacts. Changes in climate variability, particularly in terms of weather extremes, affect the environment that provides us with clean air, food, water, shelter, and security.

OPHA is engaged in statewide discussions about how we can prepare for those changes that may affect human health. We work with Oregon Health Authority to suggest priorities for protecting public health in light of certain existing health threats that will intensify, and new health threats may emerge, in climate change scenarios. We value the shared work to coordinate and develop policy that proactively promotes eliminating health disparities and achieving health equity for all people in Oregon. The data are clear that communities of color and children are once again most vulnerable to health risks associated with climate change.

Oregon Health Authority's Health Equity Committee has declared that achieving equity requires ongoing collaboration between all regions and sectors of the state, including tribal governments, to address:

- The equitable distribution or redistribution of resources and power; and

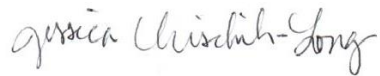
- Recognizing, reconciling, and rectifying historical and contemporary injustices.

We are pleased to see that HB 2488 seeks to achieve these same goals, particularly in the section that requires local governments to “provide fair notice to tribal communities and adopt an engagement process leading to information exchange and informed decision-making for land use decisions affecting lands, cultural sites and other resources within the local government's jurisdiction that may be of interest to tribal communities.”

The value and importance of passing HB 2488 lies in its intentional approach to addressing the nexus between just and equitable access to health and comprehensive planning for climate impacts. No other land use goal accomplishes this.

Please support the adoption of a new Goal 20 for climate justice by passing HB 2488.

On behalf of our membership,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Nischik-Long".

Jessica Nischik-Long, MPH  
Executive Director