

To the Oregon Legislature,

HB 3239 is of grave concern to all of us living near any processing plant that uses combustible hydrocarbons such as butane or ethanol. These agents are used for processing cannabis and hemp. Currently, numerous permits have been applied for and granted in Oregon for such processing located in rural areas. These may be zoned EFU or be small rural homesteads. However, they are not located anywhere near fire stations and are often in or near wooded areas.

The fire season in the summer of 2020 is testimony to how quickly fires in rural areas, farm zones, and forests can travel, and how very devastating these fires can be. Cannabis production plants are known for their risk of fires and of explosions. Such fires have been documented many times in our state with disastrous outcomes.

Nonetheless, these processing permits have continued to be approved in Oregon. HB 3239 addresses the risk of fires and explosions. The bill requires cannabis processing that uses any hydrocarbon extraction to be located in an industrial non-residential area, near fire stations and away from other vulnerable areas.

I am testifying as the President of Save Chehalem Mountain, a not for profit organization which opposes unsafe placement of cannabis processing plants in rural areas. We are strongly in support of HB 3239.