

Chair Marsh and members of the committee, for the record my name is Jonah Sandford. I'm the staff attorney for the Northwest Environmental Defense Center, and I'm here to testify in support of House Bill 3372.

I am a resident of the St. Johns neighborhood in Portland, and the current permitting experience with Northwest Metals underscores the importance of this bill. NW Metals is a company with a now-lengthy history of disregarding Oregon's environmental statutes and regulations. As Speaker Kotek outlined at the public hearing Monday, this disregard has led to concrete, significant harms to public health and the environment.

Now, NW Metals has decided to move its auto dismantling operations to our neighborhood, and has requested an air quality permit from DEQ for the new location. St. John's residents, including myself, reasonably fear that this facility will continue to ignore environmental regulations, and that NW Metals' presence in our neighborhood poses a real danger to our air quality and to public health. But DEQ has stated publicly that NW Metals' lengthy history of environmental noncompliance will not be considered in its decision to issue the new permit.

I believe it is critical that Oregon's legislature clarify and strengthen DEQ's authority to deny a permit in these situations, and this bill does so in a fair and reasonable way. Enhancing DEQ's authority in these situations will allow us to avoid foreseeable damage to our state's air, water, land, and our public health. Thank you