

OR-HB2488 Testimony

TO: Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, Vice-Chair Helm and Committee members

FROM: Harriet Edith Roberts, Eugene OR

I have long been interested in environmental and land use policy particularly as it relates to climate change, food systems, community vitality and rural issues. I have an MA in Sociology and have for several years attended classes on environmental issues at the University of Oregon as well as participated in local groups promoting environmental consciousness, climate justice policies and community rights.

I support HB2488 Goal 20 to direct local governments to address climate change, achieve environmental justice, and ensure equitable participation of disadvantaged and historically under-served communities in land use decisions.

HB2488 would require the DLCD to develop an equity mapping tool to shine light on disparate environmental impacts experienced by different communities and devise ways to remedy these impacts by helping them develop data gathering tools, creating opportunities for historically under-served and under represented communities to meaningfully participate in land use decisions. The bill would also help tribal communities participate in decisions regarding their lands and cultural resources.

Also, HB2488 includes measures to address current and projected impacts of climate change through mitigation, adaptation and sequestration methods and would require that climate change impacts and greenhouse gas emissions be considered in local government comprehensive plans and urban growth boundary decisions.

The \$800,000 in the Governor's Recommended Budget allocated for updates to statewide land use planning goals would allow for the initiation and adoption of a new Goal 20 in the 2021-2023 biennium. The bill also directs other state agencies to coordinate with DLCD in the creation of the new goal and establishes a Climate Justice Planning Goal Fund to increase DLCD and LCDC's capacity to hold hearings and seek out grants to provide financial and technical support to local governments

HB2488 would require inclusive, responsible, climate-responsive land use planning by local governments and ensure that they center climate and equity in comprehensive plan updates now and far into the future to continuously address the needs of our most impacted communities. To ease the burden on local governments, the bill offers an automatic one-year extension period to implement the new goal which will be tiered according to city size, starting with large cities and counties in 2025 and moving to smaller communities in 6 years. Funding distribution will be prioritized for local governments most needing support.

Though a model for responsible land use planning since the 1970's, Oregon's land use planning system has not been updated in 50 years and inadequately addresses climate change and has not engaged Oregon's under-served communities. People of color, immigrant, rural and low-income communities have long been excluded from land use decision-making processes and inaction regarding the climate crisis creates higher stakes for marginalized communities which will likely be most affected by their adverse impacts. Moreover, these communities could well be ones most pivotal in providing the resources most needed to create effective responses to climate change exigencies. It is likely that improved agricultural land use will be essential in improving soil health, sequestering carbon and providing the labor and community support systems for improving agricultural practices and creating better regionally-based food systems.