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February 7, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Senator Lee Beyer, Chair

Re: [SB 286](#) – Environmental Justice Council – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports efforts to secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all and promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

We strongly support SB 286 because it would elevate the role of environmental justice advocates in formulating the state’s environmental policies, ensuring that those policies adequately reflect the concerns of highly impacted communities, including the development and utilization of cumulative impact analysis by natural resource agencies.

Since its creation in 2007, the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) has provided valuable representation for underrepresented communities in advising the governor and natural resource agencies about the impact of environmental issues on those communities. The task force has performed this good work including the EJTF handbook with limited staffing and financial support from the Governor’s Office.

By appropriately establishing the expanded Environmental Justice Council within the Department of Environmental Quality, SB 286 will ensure ongoing payment of the Council’s administrative expenses, as well as staff attention to the Council’s fiscal concerns.

We understand that amendments will be offered to assure that the new Council has some autonomy and can follow the work of multiple agencies on environmental justice as the current EJTF does today. We believe the new Council should also report regularly to the Environmental Quality Commission and Oregon Global Warming Commission as well as directly to the Governor and Legislative Assembly to assure their voice is heard.

We look forward to a smooth transition from the EJTF to the new Council so it can continue to help natural resource agencies fulfill their mission.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this legislation.

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