

As most of you know, I am Alan DeBoer former Senator from the Ashland area and own several auto dealerships that are authorized public test stations. I am quite familiar with this program. I want to see Oregonian's tax dollars and fees spent wisely on effective and efficient government programs and services. My recommendation is to close the program, especially in Southern Oregon.

I'll start with the effectiveness of requiring vehicles to get tested. I think the purpose of DEQ's vehicle inspection program has run its course, failure rate is so low it doesn't justify the congestion created by the extra trips, use of fuel and inconvenience to our citizens. Just look at how the state to our north phased out their program. Washington was exempting the newest 12 model years before they entirely closed the program last year. And to our south, California exempts the most recent 8 model years. If the nation's leader in vehicle emission standards can exempt the newest 8 model years, why don't we at least copy their 8-year exemption instead of only exempting 4 years. We should just close the program, valuable employees can be reassigned to other state agencies to protect their jobs.

But I'll leave effectiveness for another day. For now, I figure if we're going to be stuck with an antiquated program, then I want to see it run as efficiently as possible and pass any savings from that along to the public.

As you've seen in the over 40 written comments from the DEQ Too Business Alliance, DEQ has shifted all their labor costs to our businesses. But instead of lowering their fee they keep increasing it as seen in this bill. I agree with my business colleagues' testimony to have the Committee direct DEQ to immediately lower the fee when testing is not done at the DEQ inspection stations. But I'm taking my testimony a step further. Instead of just asking the committee to encourage DEQ, I think it's time for something stronger. So the written testimony I am submitting will include a budget note for your consideration.

It's a very simple budget note. It doesn't direct DEQ to change any fees, but it does direct them to explain the basis for their various fee amounts. That's a very fair and reasonable expectation of our state agencies. It directs DEQ to report back by next session how they've determined their cost per test for each test method. I understand that some Portland-area self-testing fleets such as Comcast and UPS pay only \$5 for their DEQ certificates. I'm not sure why our dealerships that self-test our inventory will be stuck paying 4 times that amount. And again, we'd like to know the basis of Medford's cost per test increasing so much. I think this program costs more than it makes when all factors are included for running the seven test stations. I will also add that DEQ does not do a good job of informing the public of private testing stations' locations.

Is a budget note really necessary? Yes, especially after 3 consecutive years of our businesses asking DEQ to consider factoring in the pass-thru of savings while working through their fee modifications – and all we got was a baseless narrative that our testing causes DEQ financial hardship. So this calls for direction from an oversight body, or else DEQ will keep delaying this by setting up a stakeholder committee to study things to death. It is very simple, we provide the labor and DEQ still makes its same revenue as if they did the work. We are starting our 6th year of self-testing, let's help DEQ lesson their work load, respect a program that did its job and close the program. They have important work to do and this isn't one of them and environmentally make sense.