



April 9, 2021

The Honorable Kathleen Taylor and Jeff Reardon
Co-Chairs, Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Taylor, Representative Reardon and members of the committee:

My name is Steve Dietrich, Executive Director of the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) in Lane County, Oregon. LRAPA is the regional air quality authority responsible for protection of air quality in the southern Willamette Valley, and was formed under state statutes (ORS 468A.105) in 1968.

I am writing to advocate that POP 112, regarding LRAPA support, be included in DEQ's Legislatively Adopted Budget. DEQ's Agency Request Budget featured POP 112, recognizing the need to support air quality work conducted in Lane County.

An essential portion of LRAPA's funding originates from Oregon's General Fund. These funds leverage local partner dues, as local funding must equal or exceed state GF. Subsequently, the combined support from local dues and the state GF must then equal or exceed federal funds. This leveraged funding is critical to operate air quality programs in Lane County that attain and maintain national air quality health standards, specifically for lower-income and other environmental justice communities in our county. In short, the level of support LRAPA receives from the state has direct implications on our total budget.

LRAPA saw a 40% reduction in state funding during the 2008-2012 recession. This support has not yet been restored, while the rest of the state has benefited from increased state GF investment into DEQ's air quality division. POP 112 is a request to return an equitable level of service to Lane County communities by increasing the GF to LRAPA by \$260,000 per biennium.

General Fund support is especially important for addressing some of the most critical air quality issues facing Lane county, including:

- Ensuring the community of Oakridge meets federal ambient air quality standards
- Reducing particulate matter from wintertime wood burning
- Ensuring Lane county communities have access to quality real-time data about air quality conditions – especially during wildfire events

Enclosed with this letter is support of POP 112 from Senators Floyd Prozanski, Lee Beyer, James I Manning, Jr., and Representatives Paul Holvey, John Lively, Nancy Nathanson, Julie Fahey, and Marty Wilde.

I welcome an opportunity to meet with you via teleconference, or videoconference to further describe the importance of the state's support of LRAPA's work. This relatively modest investment into Lane County communities will help LRAPA better service Oregonians and achieve better air quality for all.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Dietrich
LRAPA Executive Director