

AIR QUALITY

POLICY OPTION PACKAGE 112 NARRATIVE

TITLE: SUPPORT THE LANE REGIONAL AIR PROTECTION
PRIORITY RANK – GENERAL FUND: 17

PURPOSE

The purpose of this package is to restore General Fund support to the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) to pre-recession levels. The agency experienced significant cuts in the mid-2000s and unlike the Department of Environmental Quality's Air Quality Division, LRAPA never saw restoration of these cuts, seriously limiting their ability to perform core work.

LRAPA is a local government agency that monitors and regulates air quality in Lane County, Oregon. LRAPA administers the federal Clean Air Act and Oregon DEQ requirements in the county, and operates seven air quality monitoring stations throughout the county. LRAPA was established in 1968 with the purpose of protecting public health, community well-being, and the environment. For the past 50 years, LRAPA has partnered with the cities, residents, and other public entities of Lane County to do just that. This local engagement makes LRAPA unique, as the rest of the state's monitoring is conducted by DEQ. LRAPA ensures that important decisions concerning air quality are made by people who live in Lane County.

LRAPA has relied on state General Funds as an important element of its budget during its entire 50-year history. Those funds have typically been delivered via a pass-thru in DEQ's budget. General Funds are used to leverage local funds provided by Lane County and the cities of Eugene, Springfield, Cottage Grove and Oakridge. Additionally, the General Funds are used to satisfy match requirements in order to access federal funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

In 2008, LRAPA's state General Fund budget was reduced by 40%, contributing to a 35% cut to the agency's staffing levels. The cuts were so severe that LRAPA needed a waiver from EPA match requirements. Since that time LRAPA's fees for permitted sources have slowly increased, as have dues paid by local governments. A modest increase in

General Fund restores equitable cost sharing across LRAPA revenue sources.

General Fund support is especially important for some of the most critical air quality issues facing Lane County. Issues that generally cannot be addressed using permit fees. Specifically:

Particulate Matter (PM)

Particulate matter has historically been the most difficult air pollution challenge in the LRAPA territory. The Eugene-Springfield and Oakridge airsheds were nonattainment areas for particulate matter in the past, and remain at risk of violating national health-based standards. Failure to maintain compliance with the PM health standards, in addition to the obvious impacts on public health, would have major negative implications for businesses planning to locate or expand in the airsheds.

Home Wood Heating

The most significant source of particulate emissions in the critical winter months during air stagnation episodes is home wood heating. LRAPA programs to reduce home wood heating emissions from woodstoves have been key to controlling particulate emissions in Eugene-Springfield and Oakridge. These wood smoke reduction programs depend on state General Funds revenue. Woodstove emissions are also a major source category for combustion-related air toxics.

Air Quality Monitoring

LRAPA has innovated and leveraged resources to provide a more comprehensive air monitoring network than other similar population-size areas of Oregon and other airsheds in the Pacific Northwest. The LRAPA monitoring network, combined with website enhancements and social media outreach, is greatly appreciated by the public for comprehensive air quality reporting during summertime wildfire impacts as well as the wintertime woodstove impacts. Most recently, LRAPA has been a leader in the expansion of low-cost particulate sensors from McKenzie Bridge to Florence, including an extensive network in the Eugene-Springfield, Cottage Grove and Oakridge areas. Permit fees provide for most of the minimal core monitoring network, but general funds make possible the enhanced network that has been much appreciated by our partners and the public.

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Complaint Investigation

Complaint response is a key program that is expected and appreciated by LRAPA’s partners and the public. Since its inception, LRAPA has made complaint response a priority. The most numerous complaints in recent years involve outdoor burning and home wood heating – not associated with permitted facilities. LRAPA provides a one-stop daily advisory for home-heating and outdoor burning that addresses the fire safety seasons established by the fire departments as well as the air pollution and stagnation forecasts by LRAPA. The daily advisory program and the complaint response program rely on general funds.

Public Engagement

Public outreach and education are closely related programs to inform Lane County communities on how to access and understand the air monitoring information and how best to comply with the important home wood heating and outdoor burning programs. This public outreach-education is also dependent on general funds.

HOW ACHIEVED

LRAPA, DEQ management and the legislature have long agreed that it is more efficient and cost-effective for LRAPA to continue to operate the air quality programs in its jurisdiction compared to the costs of DEQ assuming that work. In addition, by having at least one local air agency, Oregon has a second voice on national air quality issues involving the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other state and local air quality agencies. These benefits however are reliant on adequate funding from the state, among other sources.

This package increases pass-thru General Fund support to LRAPA by \$250,000, ongoing. This represents an approximately 90% increase of the existing support provided by the state to LRAPA (\$277,000 in 2019-2021). This increase is just slightly above what General Fund support would be had it kept pace with inflation over the last 13 years. It is also an equitable response to the increased funding committed by LRAPA’s local government partners and permitted sources.

Without additional General Fund support LRAPA lacks critical resources to address the some of the most pressing air quality issues in Lane County. Most importantly, General Fund supports work necessary

to ensure communities within Lane County remain in attainment with the federal health-based standards for fine particulate matter.

QUANTIFYING RESULTS

Approval of this package will allow LRAPA to maintain and enhance the level of effort in key program area discussed above. LRAPA measures the success of their efforts in a variety of ways:

- LRAPA is accountable to a nine member board of directors and a Citizens Advisory Committee. LRAPA works with their governing boards and the Lane County community towards achieving goals related to air quality outcomes, service, partnerships, and public involvement. Progress on these goals is detailed in the agency’s annual report, available on their website www.lrapa.org
- LRAPA reports regularly to their funders, including the US EPA and Oregon DEQ, on key performance measures relating to permit issuance and timeliness, public engagement, complaint response and enforcement activities.
- Most importantly, LRAPA is accountable to the air quality conditions their work is focused on, such as compliance with federal air quality standards.

2021-23 STAFFING IMPACT

POSITION	TOTAL POSITIONS	POSITION #	FTE
No positions	0		0
Total	0		0

REVENUE SOURCE

General Fund	\$250,000
Other Funds	-
Federal Funds	-
Total	\$250,000

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2023-25 STAFFING IMPACT

POSITION	TOTAL POSITIONS	POSITION #	FTE
No positions	0		0
Total	0		0

REVENUE SOURCE

General Fund	\$260,000
Other Funds	-
Federal Funds	-
Total	\$260,000