

**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources
on HB 5516**

April 12th, 2021

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Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

RE: SB 5516 (Main DEQ budget) – SUPPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for many DEQ programs, which provide critical services to our residents and businesses by ensuring clean and safe air, water, and land, which is critical for a strong economy and quality of life. On behalf of our thousands of members statewide, Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) urges your support on HB 5516.

Within the Air Quality Division, we strongly support:

- POP 110 - Fee increase to support the Vehicle Inspection Program, a nominal increase to support this critical air quality and emissions reduction program. See testimony on SB 5517.
- POP 111 - To provide resources to fully implement greenhouse gas reduction programs currently under development by DEQ, including the Climate Protection Program and the Statewide Transportation Strategy. Action to reduce climate pollution is essential in order for Oregon to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets and avoid the most harmful effects of climate change. (\$2,000,000 GF)
- POP 113 - To help fully implement the diesel emissions reductions under HB 2007. This would fund one position to help with the expected truck retrofits and phase outs in 2023 and 2025. (\$365,236 GF)
- POP 114 - To increase the Asbestos fee, which has not been increased in over 10 years. This funding is critical to sustain staffing and efficient progress for protecting construction workers and others exposed to asbestos.

Within the Water Quality program, we strongly support:

- POP 120 - Supports continued investments in core programmatic NPDES and WPCF permitting functions necessary to improve the quality and timeliness of permits and permit renewals. (\$486,065 GF, \$506,625 OF; even 1/2 the dollars would be helpful)
- POP 121 - TMDL implementation: Two positions to implement clean watershed plans (TMDLs), improving water quality in areas not meeting water quality standards. (\$531,073 GF)
- POP 122 - Improves agency capacity to ensure that large onsite septic systems are properly functioning and that water pollution and public health risks are prevented, this POP will help rural and low-income Oregonians recover from wildfire impacts as well as protecting public health from failing privately owned septic systems. (\$205,825 GF, \$175,117 OF)

- POP 123 - Supports agency capacity to review federal dredge and fill permit applications and issue water quality certifications to assure that the activities being authorized will meet state water quality standards. It would also support site inspections to ensure compliance and measure program effectiveness; increase proactive technical assistance to applicants; and provide needed outreach. (\$207,000 GF)
- POP 124 - Pays for the purchase of a commercial off-the-shelf loan portfolio management software to replace the Clean Water State Revolving Fund's (CWSRF) manual and outdated business practices with a secure system that will increase efficiency, improve customer service and reduce risk for material errors. (\$1,599,000 OF)
- POP 125 - Restores 5 FTE in the water quality program that were proposed for elimination due to earlier projections of lottery fund revenue shortfall: Positions provide critical support to non-point source pollution reduction efforts. (\$1,543,776 LF)
- POP 141 - Provides funding for the Environmental Data Management System (EDMS) to help DEQ manage workflows, data, and program reporting related to core agency business processes. The 2019 Legislature approved bond funding for the acquisition and customization of EDMS, but the agency will need to recover ongoing hosting and maintenance costs. DEQ is requesting authority to add a modest surcharge on invoices for programs using the system. (\$1.6 million)
- POP 160 - Increases base funding for the DEQ laboratory to maintain and replace aging equipment. (\$550,000 GF)

We support DEQ and OHA's joint efforts to protect public health from harmful algae blooms

- HB 3102: HABs Purchase cyanotoxin analyzer
- HB 3093: HABs DEQ study & report

We also support HB 3090, which could provide \$2 million for the existing onsite septic loan system, a program that has broad support across many organizations.

Within the Land Quality division we support SB 582 to modernize our recycling system. While OEC has not engaged in the detailed negotiations of this bill, we support our partner organizations and DEQ's work in making a better, more comprehensive and efficient system for all.

OEC also supports funding in the DEQ budget to conduct a study to determine obstacles and opportunities for electrifying farm, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles to reduce pollution and carbon emissions.

Finally, we support POP 90, which establishes an Office of Environmental Justice within DEQ and creates three new positions to support this important work, including a manager, a research analyst and a community outreach coordinator. This package also includes funding (\$3 million) for data analysis to address environmental burdens in impacted communities.

We urge you to support the DEQ budget and all of the requested POPs.