



February 11, 2021

Representative Julie Fahey, Chair
House Committee on Housing

RE: HB 2842 – SUPPORT

Chair Fahey and Committee Members:

Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization that advances innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations. Climate Solutions is a regional non-profit working to accelerate clean energy solutions to the climate crisis. **On behalf of our thousands of members statewide, we urge you to support HB 2842, a bill that will protect the health of Oregon families by improving living environments for low-income households.**

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the 2020 wildfire events, the crises of the past year have made clearer than ever the importance of a healthy living environment to the overall health, safety and wellbeing of Oregonians. Our homes have the ability to provide us shelter from hazardous wildfire smoke and other harmful air pollution, and refuge from contagious disease. Unfortunately, not all Oregonians are equally equipped to protect their families and loved ones from external health hazards.

Too many Oregonians live in housing that is energy burdened and in need of repairs-- and low income Oregonians are most at risk. People living in energy inefficient homes may be more susceptible to health hazards such as mold, extreme weather and poor outdoor air quality. The need for efficient and quality housing is even greater given the connection between air pollution, wildfire smoke, and exacerbated COVID-19 symptoms.

Simply put, healthier homes and buildings will lead to better health outcomes. HB 2842 would help low-income households and other environmental justice communities make important repairs to improve air quality filtration, reduce environmental toxins like lead, radon and mold, and maximize the energy efficiency of homes. At the same time, by increasing energy efficiency and lowering utility bills, HB 2842 will reduce economic burdens for struggling low income families and cut harmful climate pollution. In doing so, HB 2842 will improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Oregonians across the state.

Sincerely,

Nora Apter
Climate Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council

Meredith Connolly
Oregon Director
Climate Solutions