



February 11, 2021

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Akashdeep Singh and I am the Policy and Advocacy Manager at OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon. It is an honor to testify before you in support of HB 2842.

As the old adage goes, health starts at home. Many Oregon families are living in energy inefficient homes and face an increased risk of sick days and potential hospital visits due to mold, cold weather, and a lack of ventilation to filter out wildfire smoke and bad outdoor quality. During the pandemic, these risks only augment as Oregon families have to spend more time at home.

Poor ventilation has another serious consequence for COVID patients. As reported by Professor Linsey Marr, more COVID can be found “in the air of homes of infected people than in hospitals.” While hospitals have an air exchange rate of approximately 12 air change per hour, homes have an ACH “usually around 0.5 to 1.”

Wildfires will become more severe and frequent in the near future until we tackle the fossil fueled systems burning and suffocating our communities. It is imperative that we act to protect Oregon families across the state from the effects of wildfires and pollution.

HB 2842 creates a Healthy Homes program that can invest in critical home upgrades for low-income Oregon families. It can have a significant impact for communities of color, who already breathe in a disproportionate amount of air pollution as a result of environmental racism.

The Healthy Homes program is an opportunity to build a resilient and equitable foundation to ensure the safety and health of underserved Oregon families from across the state. Let's take this important step forward.

Thank you Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan, and members of the Committee, for supporting HB 2842.

Sincerely,

Akashdeep Singh

Policy and Advocacy Manager
OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon