

Esteemed Legislators. I am a resident of Northeast Portland, and I am a retired epidemiologist who worked for 27 years for the Oregon Health Authority, investigating environmental and occupational public health issues. In my work I saw first hand the adverse health impacts on children and adults who live in drafty, moldy, uninsulated homes. I interacted with low-income families in large cities, towns and rural areas who faced costly winter heating bills that forced many to choose between heating their home, to keep families warm and healthy, versus putting food on the table. As a result, both adults and children faced increased health problems (from asthma, colds, and other respiratory conditions) that resulted in increased sick days and time away from work and school, along with increased need to utilize costly health care services.

I am writing to urge you to support and pass HB 2842, the Healthy Homes Bill. The benefits of this bill are multiple for low-income people living across the state and in each of your legislative districts. Some of the major benefits include:

- Fewer sick days for children and adults
- Reduced residential energy bills thanks to better insulated housing
- New jobs created in home energy retrofits
- Better shelter in weatherized homes from wildfire smoke and air pollution
- Reduced burden on healthcare systems thanks to better respiratory health

Experience has shown us that home energy retrofits can be expensive, and such basic improvements are beyond the reach of low- and moderate-income families who own their homes. Additionally, renters often don't have a say in home upgrades that are at the discretion of the landlord. HB 2842 would make grants available to local governments (including tribal governments), housing authorities, nonprofits, and community groups so that low-income homeowners and renters alike receive the many health benefits of a well-insulated home. Improving home energy efficiency is also a vital way to reduce Oregon's dependence on fossil fuels and help our transition to 100 percent renewable energy. It would also help provide many living wage jobs across the state.

Thank you,

Michael Heumann, MPH, MA