

January 28, 2021

To: Chair Beyer and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
From: Sharla Moffett, Oregon Business & Industry
RE: OBI Testimony SB 58

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on this important issue for Oregon Business & Industry members. OBI is Oregon's most comprehensive business association representing approximately 1,600 businesses that employ over 250,000. We represent multiple sectors and serve as the state's Retail and Manufacturing Councils.

Senate Bill 58 makes several changes to DEQ's ability to assess fees on regulated industries. Those changes include the ability to add a fee to recoup credit card processing fees. The bill also authorizes DEQ to establish surcharges to fund the environmental data management system.

Businesses are reeling from the impacts of the recession and are struggling to survive. They are facing new taxes from all corners just when their budgets are tightest. The last thing they need right now are more fees added to the cost of doing business.

OBI understands the need of DEQ to recover credit card processing fees, although we hope that the agency also explores less costly options to businesses such as electronic fund transfers.

However, we have real concerns about the proposed surcharge related to the environmental data management system. The bill seems to give DEQ unlimited authority to set this surcharge at whatever amount they deem appropriate. The environmental data management system is intended to benefit all individuals who will be seeking data and information from the agency. We support that effort but do not believe regulated industries should have to fund it alone. Current public records laws allow the agency to recover costs from the requestor of information. All beneficiaries of the environmental data management system should be required to fund these improvements, not just business.

Thank you for your consideration.