



Health Department

February 2, 2021

House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity
900 Court St. NE - Remote C
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2518 - Establishes program to make forgivable loans to reimburse private owner or operator of brownfield for eligible costs incurred in completion of removal or remedial action at brownfield.

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Cate and Kropf, and members of the Committee, my name is Andrea Hamberg and I am the Interim Environmental Health Services Director for Multnomah County Health Department. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2518.

As of 2015 there are as many as 2,300 properties characterized as Brownfields in Multnomah County. Brownfield sites are more likely to be located in historically underserved communities that bear a disproportionate burden of threats to health and well-being¹. Brownfield sites have two major public health implications: risk of exposure to contaminants and lost potential for health-benefiting development. This bill adds resources to support the assessment and clean-up of sites that may contain toxic substances and to begin the process of redevelopment into uses that benefit the community.

This bill could further protect health by amending Section 4 to include an advisory committee review, and financial criteria, in rule when reviewing applications. This would ensure funds are distributed more equitably and not on a first come first served basis. This could diversify the applicant pool and grant recipients, prioritizing projects based on need, and allowing for a variety of perspectives in approving applications.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Andrea Hamberg
Interim Environmental Health Services Director
Multnomah County Health Department

¹ Metro. (2012). Regional Brownfield Scoping Project. Retrieved from: <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files>