

I would like to speak in favor of this bill which would enable us to regulate indirect sources of diesel pollution.

My name is Melanie Plaut. I am a retired OB/GYN doctor.

I was torn in preparing this testimony. I asked myself, should I emphasize the health benefits of regulating diesel from indirect sources, or the green-house gas benefits, both of which I feel strongly about?

While I was sitting at my computer pondering which direction to go, I got a phone call. One of my friends was letting me know that a favorite neighbor - someone I've known for over 30 years -was just diagnosed with widespread lung cancer. She is a non-smoking, marathon-walking grandmother of four and a retired nurse with a great sense of humor. Now I'm not saying we can know for certain that her lung cancer is related to Portland's air quality. But can you tell her for sure that it is not, given the severity of our diesel pollution?

Eight years ago the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a part of the World Health Organization, reclassified diesel exhaust. Prior to that time it was considered "probably carcinogenic." But after reviewing two large well-done studies, diesel was reclassified. As Dr.Portier, the Chairman of the IARC working group said: "The scientific evidence was compelling, and the conclusion was unanimous: diesel engine exhaust causes lung cancer in humans. Given the additional health impacts from diesel particulate, exposure to this mixture of chemical should be reduced worldwide."

In California, the Air Resources Board has determined that 70% of air-toxic related risk is attributable to diesel particulate matter. So if we are going to do something about health and air pollution, it only makes sense to work on diesel sources. The famous criminal Willie Sutton was once asked why he robbed banks, and as you probably know, he said: Because that's where the money is. Similarly, the place to regulate diesel emissions is the site where the diesel is emitted. We know more about the health effects of air pollution, and more about the critical nature of the climate than we did a decade ago, and certainly more than when the indirect source rules were originally written. Our rules have to change to reflect this knowledge.

According to the EPA, diesel exposure in the the tri-county area of Portland is in the 95%ile nationally. Normally being in the 95%ile is something to be proud of, but not when it means that the Portland metro area has some of the worst diesel pollution in the country. As you well know, this affects certain vulnerable populations more than others: perhaps your kids or your parents, and definitely people of color and those with low incomes. You have an opportunity to use the mechanism of indirect source regulation to make a difference. So as a Portland resident who does not wish an increased risk of lung cancer or any of the many other negative health effects of diesel for anyone - please, use your power for this common-sense regulatory move. I ask you to vote YES – direct DEQ to begin the indirect source rule-making so we can finally control our out-of-control diesel emissions.

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