

Submitter: Pat DeLaquil  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources  
Measure: HB4077

February 4, 2022

To: House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Re: Environmental Justice and HB 4077

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4077. My name is Dr. Pat DeLaquil, I live in Gresham, and I strongly support policy that pushes forward environmental justice for all Oregonians. HB 4077 addresses two immediate problems.

First, the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF), formed over a decade ago, lacks adequate resources and the infrastructure necessary to continue its work with environmental justice communities. The EJTF has never had a real budget or designated staff person. This bill will re-envision the EJTF as the Environmental Justice Council, and expand its membership to include a youth representative. The goal is to ensure that when Oregon state agencies make decisions that environmental justice communities are not disproportionately affected.

Second, it's difficult to determine the scope of environmental burdens and impacts on Oregon's most vulnerable communities because there is no cohesive and coordinated initiative within the state to bring information on environmental justice parameters into one comprehensive and readily accessible structure. HB 4077 will create and implement a program to develop the region-specific data collection and mapping capacity that is needed to determine current impacts on vulnerable and highly impacted communities in Oregon. This capability will provide state agencies with the information to enhance and improve their decisions in environmental program development, implementation, and funding.

Oregon needs more investment in environmental justice, especially in the midst of countless natural disasters and an ongoing pandemic. A revitalized Environmental Justice Council and new data-mapping capacity will be the first steps towards actualizing this goal. Please invest in environmental justice and support HB 4077.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pat DeLaquil  
Gresham, OR