

February 7, 2022

House Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding HB 4077. I am writing to express the City of Gresham’s support for this legislation.

The Gresham City Council supports public policy and budget allocations that advance equitable outcomes for all Oregonians. The City recognizes the impacts of policy decisions that lead to inequitable outcomes, and supports legislation that reduce racial disparities. HB 4077 is an important step to create consistent practices throughout the state for engaging communities and establishing measurable goals for reducing environmental disparities.

The creation of the Environmental Justice Council and the development of the environmental justice mapping tool will further the ability for state agencies to address inequities. All jurisdictions can benefit from the development of best practices for increasing public participation, recommendations for establishing measurable goals, and guidelines for prioritizing highly impacted communities in order to advance a healthy environment for all residents.

The proposed environmental justice mapping tool can support best practices to address environmental health disparities. The geographic determinates of health are well documented. For example, the Dignity Health Community Needs Index¹ provides a score for every zip code in the United States and is an indicator of a communities’ demand for a range of healthcare needs. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the areas of highest need, zip codes in Gresham include scores of 4.6 and 4.8, some of the highest in the state. These disparities have been further documented in local reports such as the Multnomah County Health Department’s 2014 Report Card on Racial and Ethnic Disparities. This report found numerous disparities and levels of concern for communities of color, and several indicators that disproportionately impact residents of east Multnomah County.² We support the opportunity for improved data collection and consistent methodological development. A consistent, statewide evidence-based approach will benefit communities throughout the state.

¹ <http://cni.dignityhealth.org>

² <https://multco.us/file/37530/download>

We believe that HB 4077 will further just policy outcomes for community engagement, community health and environmental benefit. We thank you for your consideration and recommend your support for HB 4077.

Sincerely,



Brian Monberg
Government Affairs Manager