



COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER  
407 Portway Ave, Suite 301  
Hood River, OR 97031  
(541) 387-3030  
[columbiariverkeeper.org](http://columbiariverkeeper.org)

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Ana Molina  
1125 SE Madison Street Suite 103A  
Portland, OR 97214

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4077 and the -1 amendments. My name is Ana Molina, I live in Portland. I am the Field Manager for Columbia Riverkeeper (CRK) a non-profit environmental organization whose mission is to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. I am also a member of the Racial Justice Council's, Environmental Equity Committee. Before this, I was the Statewide Environmental Justice Projects Manager for Beyond Toxics, an environmental justice organization in Eugene. I have been working on environmental justice issues in Oregon for the past 5 years and have seen the movement grow from just a couple of organizations working on environmental justice to seeing many community-based organizations now hire for their own environmental and climate justice organizers. Last year SB 286 did not pass and we at CRK are excited to see HB 4077 that will continue to push forward environmental justice for all Oregonians.

I'm giving comment today because we at CRK know that in order to create and implement a just plan for the future of Oregon's environment, we need region-specific data about Oregon communities. This is especially true when it comes to environmental justice communities: Oregon needs to be able to identify demographics, socio-economic status, and factors such as environmental conditions and health hazards. Our state needs dedicated resources to continue bridging connections between state agencies and the public to raise concerns brought by environmental justice communities. By dedicating these resources Oregon will be able to work with state agencies to allocate appropriate funding for programs that address the needs of EJ communities. The -1 amendments more clearly outline the community engagement that will occur in developing an environmental justice mapping tool. We support the changes that help deepen community input and allow the EJC to lead this work. This is in line with best practices I've seen in my past work.

As a community organizer that advocated for the EJTF to host their official meetings outside of Salem and make them more accessible to community members, I worked on statewide community listening sessions in 2017 and early 2018. Beyond Toxics and OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon hosted meetings with community members and community-based organizations

in Newport, Klamath, and Salem the day before the official EJTF meetings when they met in those locations. We would invite the EJTF members to come and sit in on those meetings so they could hear directly from community members on the issues impacting their communities. This was done in the evenings when most people were off of work and could participate. A lot of those community members were not always able to attend the official EJTF meetings that were hosted during the day. After the community meetings, many community members felt like they were actually listened to and that their concerns were being acknowledged by folks who had access to elevate their concerns.

It takes a lot of resources and time to do outreach to communities. To make meetings accessible and offer services such as food and daycare if meetings are hosted at night when most people are out of work. To build an environment where communities can feel safe to share their experiences. When working on these listening sessions we faced challenges along the way such as the lack of having the official support of the EJTF for the community sessions which made some people less hesitant to attend. There were also many people who had not heard about the EJTF and what they did, they were skeptical about who our organizations were and who the EJTF was. If the EJTF had the resources and staffing to work on these listening sessions it could have been helpful in outreach. The EJTF has never had a real budget or designated staff person to support many of the efforts to connect and build relationships with environmental justice communities across the state and lacks adequate resources and the infrastructure necessary to continue their work within environmental justice communities.

In order to really understand the impacts and resources needed for environmental justice communities, there is the need for community data sets to be included in the mapping tool, the -1 amendments in HB4077 would create this opportunity to gather this kind of data. Oftentimes community-based organizations spend a lot of time and resources in collecting and analyzing data to ground-truth the experience communities are facing. When I was with Beyond Toxics this was something we did to bring attention to in the West Eugene neighborhood where community members are overburdened by air pollution. It was a lot of work: gathering data from multiple sites about demographics, pollution, and income to then compile this data together with the door-to-door canvassing data collected. The mapping tool HB 4077 would create needs to encompass community-based data that would otherwise be missed. As a previous community organizer with Beyond Toxics, the data collected has been valuable in advocating for stronger air pollution protections in the West Eugene neighborhood. By supporting HB 4077 Oregon state agencies would collect data and information that enhance and influence their decisions in environmental program development, implementation, and funding.

As someone who has done environmental justice organizing and advocacy for the past 5 years, I am really excited to see the potential that a cohesive and well-coordinated mapping initiative could have on future organizing and community-based policy development. Where issues can be brought forward from the communities most impacted by environmental injustice because there is data to ground-truth their experiences. This will also be an invaluable tool for the Environmental Equity Committee which has the opportunity to give recommendations to the Governor's Budget.

As the environmental and climate justice movement keeps growing in Oregon and our state continues to want to prioritize this work, HB 4077 is a critical piece of legislation to help us prioritize where resources and funding should go.



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Thank you for your time and please support HB 4077 Environmental Justice for All and the amendments that deepen an inclusive approach to work with communities.

Ana Molina  
Field Manager  
Columbia River Keeper