

**Testimony to the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
On SB 1533-A****February 21, 2022****Jamie Pang-South, Environmental Health Program Director
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Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council supports SB 1533-A.

As amended, SB 1533-A will allow federally recognized tribes and public education providers to access grant funds and technical support to provide cleaner air spaces and install smoke filtration systems in public buildings. This includes planning and establishing the cleaner air spaces themselves as well as aligning practices for voluntary evacuations and emergency sheltering operations through consultation and collaboration with the Oregon Health Authority.

Wildfires and other drought and climate change-related disasters continue to wreak havoc across our state and the West as a whole. While those disasters impact everyone, they have disproportionate impacts on tribal and rural communities. Lack of planning for disaster relief puts them at great risk. Providing funding and technical support for federally recognized tribes and public education providers to establish safe, cleaner air spaces is essential to the health and well-being of those communities.

Poor air quality is a significant human health hazard, triggering asthma attacks/respiratory illnesses, and one that must be addressed. Where grant funds are used to install smoke filtration systems in public buildings, OEC recommends that the systems be required to be equipped with a MERV standard 13-16 filters), as per EPA standards. These filtration systems have the potential to filter out both coarse and fine particulate matter (particulates as small as 1.0 micrometers). This is important because the smaller a particles is, the more dangerous it is; wildfires produce an abundance of these smaller particles, so any smoke filtration system must be designed and installed with that in mind.

OEC urges you to support SB 1533-A.