

February 14, 2023

Paxton Rothwell
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Oregon House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
RE: Support HB 2396

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Bobby Levy, Vice-Chair Emerson Levy, and other members of the Committee,

My name is Paxton Rothwell and I live in Northeast Portland. When I first moved to Oregon 5 years ago I believed the air was clean. The pristine trees, rainy days, and mild weather painted a picture of wellbeing. I was wrong. This last fall and winter there were countless 'yellow' and 'red' air days in Portland. Pollution filled the sky and made the air smell like a dank campfire that I wasn't invited to. These days showed me how much we all pollute this beautiful place. We need to do better on so many fronts, and regulating diesel emissions is a great place to start.

Harmful diesel emissions negatively impact my everyday life. To get to work I either take public transit or bike. As I stand on the street waiting for the bus, I gulp in mouthfuls of stinky polluted air made more harmful by the lax regulations Oregon imposes on diesel vehicles. As I ride my bike, I huff and puff through clouds of invisible pollutants created through the combustion of fossil fuels used to power vehicles. I do my best to make my travel patterns as low-carbon as possible. But I feel like I am being punished because everyone else seems to not care that their vehicles are polluting the air we all rely on. Increasing regulations on emissions is a great way to take a stance protecting the health of Oregonians.

I stumbled upon an article yesterday that presented dire results in a study of how diesel emissions affect brain chemistry (linked at the end of this testimony). Just a short exposure to diesel fumes causes a decrease in brain connectivity. This is terrible news! Especially so for those driving or working with diesel vehicles, working on a construction site, or that have a home or business nearby a state highway (which, unfortunately, I do). Regulating the amount of harmful pollutants that can be emitted from Oregon's diesel vehicles would hugely increase the public health of the State.

I'm sure you'll hear pushback from trucking lobbyists or other special interests. They'll say that this will be too expensive to implement, or that Oregon won't see the effects soon enough so it's

not worth it to regulate. Don't listen to their BS. Oregon's public health and environment in the long term need to be and must always be more important than the short term profits of any business. Even though diesel operators have gotten used to lax regulations in Oregon, it doesn't mean it was right for them to harm Oregonians. And that's what is happening now. Diesel emissions are harming Oregonians every single day that they are poorly regulated.

There is no time to waste. Please support HB 2396.

Sincerely,
Paxton Rothwell
PCP to HD-43

References:

<https://news.ubc.ca/2023/01/24/traffic-pollution-impairs-brain-function/>