



Treekeepers of Washington County
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27 February 2023

Oregon State

House Committee on Climate, Energy and the Environment

Re: 2023 HB3016 Establishes Community Green Infrastructure Grant Program

Treekeepers of Washington County endorses a YES vote on this measure.

Treekeepers of Washington County (www.treekeeperswc.org) is a non-profit volunteer community organization. Our mission is to expand the knowledge of local residents about how to best enjoy and protect trees. We engage with local communities and advocate together to protect our existing trees for the many benefits to the community.

HB3016 will help fund agency, corporate and community efforts like ours that are happening around our state as a result of a new awareness of Tree Canopy benefits. We are greatly appreciative of the recent federal support to revitalize the Oregon Department of Forestry Urban Forestry Program to help get things started. But we also know there needs to be an ongoing state fund to keep programs in place. HB3016 is needed to ensure there is a public funded program to maintain the important long term results.

We are all too aware that the recent pandemic siphoned funding from many key programs and now we need to address “the other urgent issues, like climate change and public health.” Green infrastructure and urban tree canopy provide many benefits including stormwater management, water quality improvements, carbon sequestration, human physical and mental health benefits, wildlife habitat and increased property values. There are significant Return On Investments as well as Results Of Inactions. This bill is a good fiscal decision.

Our state has made a commitment to Justice, Equity Diversity and Inclusion. This bill will also afford organizations an opportunity to address environmental justice and environmental health disparities. There have been studies done around cities in our state, but no funding to take action on these issues. Even the Climate Friendly and Affordable Housing Rules call for new trees in the plans, but there is no public funding for irrigation and maintenance for trees in public housing. Low income families cannot afford to maintain those trees themselves. And low income families need trees more than they need air conditioners which cost money to run – and drive up climate change. We need to have the funds to do away with the Urban Heat Islands. Tree canopy is known to lower the overall temperature of a neighborhood by as much as 9-15 degrees. We need more work to identify Best Known Methods of addressing this.

Fortunately, we even have a model to learn from, the state of Washington State revitalized their Evergreen Communities Act in 2021. We can learn where the greatest benefits are and avoid those early missteps.

With the tremendous pressures of economic growth and climate refugees, our state is also faced with the challenges of providing adequate housing – often at the cost of urban tree canopy. This is another impetus for us to help communities develop urban forestry plans. We need to be able to analyze existing tree canopy data and conduct new assessments to identify priority areas for urban forestry projects and provide funding support for those projects.

Community engagement and participation is critical for the long term support and maintenance of the urban tree canopy. We've come to learn that low income families often require financial assistance in order to participate in these community engagement workshops and interactions.

We appreciate the entire committee and staff's hard work on this legislation and we hope you will provide maximum funding for the entire state to be able to benefit from this green infrastructure approach to natural climate solutions which also bring joy to the general population.

Thank You,

Fran Warren

Fran Warren on behalf of

Treekeepers of Washington County

