

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
on Senate Bill 803**

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**Jacqui Treiger, Campaign Manager: Climate and Transportation
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.

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the Committee,

I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 803, which will phase out the sale of petroleum diesel by 2030, replacing it with renewable diesel. Doing so will protect our public health, climate, communities, and local economy.

Every year in Oregon, diesel engine exhaust is responsible for an estimated 176 premature deaths, 25,910 lost work days and annual costs from exposure of \$3.5 billion.¹ Oregonians pay for the damage from air toxics through the medical and hospital bills, costly medicine, and missed days of work or school that comes with worse health from breathing dirty air. These effects are disproportionately experienced by Black, Indigenous, Communities of Color and Oregonians living on low incomes who live in and around high pollution zones due to historic and institutional racist policies and practices. Although diesel powered vehicles make up only six percent of the vehicles on the road in Oregon, their air pollution impacts make up 60 to 70 percent of particulate emissions from all vehicles.

While the Oregon Environmental Council strongly supports policies to get us off fossil fuels as quickly as possible and accelerate electrification in the light, medium- and heavy-duty vehicle markets, we also recognize that this transformation takes time. While the electrification of these vehicles and its infrastructure has already begun, we are also looking at opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality now, while the transition to a fossil free future takes place. The April 2022 United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report stated unequivocally that current policies to limit climate emissions will not be sufficient to avoid catastrophic and irreversible climate impacts, only further underscoring the need for urgent action by decision-makers in Oregon to significantly and immediately cut fossil fuel emissions.² We need bigger and bolder climate policies year after year to avoid the worst climate

¹Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, 2015: The Concerns about Diesel Engine Exhaust, available at: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/DieselEffectsReport.pdf>

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022: Summary for Policymakers. In *Sixth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_SPM.pdf



PO Box 14822
Portland, OR 97239
503.222.1963
OEOnline.org | @OEOnline

impacts; meaning we must do everything we can to ensure pollution reductions happen at the pace and scale necessary.

Transitioning to renewable diesel also has the potential to support important economic and cost saving benefits, by helping to protect Oregonians from current gas price volatility and future price fluctuations. Clean fuels, like renewable diesel, have less volatility and therefore are less subject to global swings in gas and oil prices. The more we can move toward electric vehicles and cleaner fuels, the less we have to worry about the price of oil and gas being determined half a world away. Electrification and cleaner ways of making those fuels exist right here in Oregon.

The unfortunate reality is that diesel engines still make up the overwhelming majority of the trucks and buses on the road. In the meantime, Oregon's transportation sector is responsible for nearly 40 percent of our state's total climate pollution and much of the air pollution that is harming our lungs and health, especially within environmental justice communities. Renewable diesel has an important transitional role to play, reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from diesel by up to 80 percent.

We urge you to support cost-savings, job creation, and clean air for people and families across Oregon by voting yes on SB 803. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jacqui Treiger
Campaign Manager: Climate and Transportation
Oregon Environmental Council
jacquit@oeonline.org