



TO: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

FROM: Beyond Toxics

RE: Support for SB 5525

DATE: 3/21/2023

Dear Co-Chair Campos, Co-Chair Valderrama, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Beyond Toxics, a state-wide environmental justice nonprofit, and thousands of those we serve across the state, I express our strong support of SB 5525. Beyond Toxics has been an active public interest participant in policy decisions related to the health of communities of color and those who are vulnerable to threats to their public well-being for over twenty years. We are deeply committed to practices that promote environmental justice principles.

State investments in public health are a win for every Oregonian, and funding to support health equity for impacted individuals, diverse families and marginalized communities is needed now more than ever. Beyond Toxics is a member of the Community Health Equity Coalition, which is made up of more than 80 community-based organizations who are collectively responding to the immediate public health needs of more than 500,000 Oregonians.

Health equity funding enables Beyond Toxics to partner with other community-based organizations to serve communities who are most impacted by health risks from climate stressors and air pollution. For example, in partnership with the Eugene-Springfield NAACP, we are supporting youth of color to participate in building community gardens to increase access to local and healthy food. Together with the Bethel Active Community, a working-class neighbor in an industrial corridor in Lane County, we are working to increase community participation in emergency preparedness and resilience planning that improves public health, socio-economic conditions, health and safety in impacted communities.

Health equity funding allows our organization to expand the culturally appropriate programs to reach more people to reduce health disparities. We request an investment of \$286M above the current service level for OHA Public Health Modernization Budget, which includes \$100M for CBOs who are a lifeline to Oregon's most diverse and marginalized populations across the state. As a community-based organization, Beyond Toxics strongly endorses the SB 5525 based on what we have learned over the years about the vital role of sustainable community health programs to fulfill the growing needs of diverse communities to thrive in an ever-changing public health landscape.

We thank you for your time and we urge your support for SB 5525 and health equity funding.