

Submitter: Dale Svart

On Behalf Of: Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources

Measure: HB5018

DEQ is seriously underfunded and has been for decades. Until it is properly funded to advocate for clean air, water, and soil, it will continue to exist as a department that is paid by industry to pollute. This is not an acceptable way to advocate for a cleaner environment. I live adjacent to Columbia Steel Castings Corporation which has been openly polluting the airshed in my neighborhood for the 26 years I've lived here. They recently closed because they were unwilling to put filters on their exhaust vents. DEQ called them into the Cleaner air Oregon program in 2020 and discovered their manganese emissions were over 700% higher than they were reporting. DEQ lacked the funding to actually measure the air themselves, which meant that myself and several other citizen volunteers had to purchase air monitoring devices to prove that Columbia Steel was polluting. They closed as a result of our citizen involvement. DEQ closed the CAO review before completion and so far has not pursued a case to determine if they were misrepresenting their emissions. Due to their inadequate funding, DEQ has asked us volunteer citizens to pay an air quality scientist to interpret past emissions data. Industries that blatantly misrepresent their emissions should be held accountable and fined accordingly. It should be DEQ's job to do this. The current system paying to pollute is a travesty. The honor system allowing industries to submit their own data needs to be abolished. Fund DEQ so they can do the work required to keep our state free from industrial pollution.

Thank you, Dale Svart