

TESTIMONY ON HB 2659

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs, Harman and Owens, and Members of the Committee

I write as a concerned Oregonian, who has lived in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Southeast Portland for seven years, having moved here from Boston and its blizzards. I have seen the sleepy neighborhood of Brooklyn revive with the Max Orange Line extension, some new commercial spaces, and several apartment projects which have brought new life and energy to the neighborhood. The neighborhood has generally welcomed two apartment projects for a total of 280 renters, both using heat pump technology, and with only limited parking.

I oppose HB 2659 and urge the Committee not to move it forward. It is an exceedingly confusing bill that seems to unwind, constrain, delay, and effectively repeal the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking that began in 2020. This rulemaking applies to only western Oregon cities with populations of 50,000 or more.

The purposes of this rulemaking, through an admirably participatory process, is to put Oregon on track toward its goal of reducing climate pollution by 75% by 2050. Our current track will only get us to a 20% reduction, which is wholly inadequate. No doubt, further planning and processes will be needed. Of course, goals, policies, and change can be inconvenient, but this is not the time to undermine the goal itself or to make it even more difficult to accomplish.

Please support Oregon's climate goals and policies, and vote against this unwise bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Wesley Ward