

Testimony to the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Committee On SB 5506

May 5, 2023

Thomas Baker, Legislative Director Oregon Environmental Council

Dear Chair Stenier, Chair Sanchez, Vice Chair Girod, Vice Chair Gomberg, Vice Chair Smith, and members of the committee. For the record my name is Thomas Baker and I am the Legislative Director for the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC). Founded in 1968, OEC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance equitable, innovative and collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Thank you to this committee as well as its subcommittees for all your hard work this legislative session. OEC understands the challenging task you have ahead of you and the many difficult budget decisions you will have to make. Our Legislature can and should invest in our reserves, but we also know that Oregon can't wait to take action on major crises, including pollution threatening our environment and communities. There are critical environmental priorities needed to protect our climate, water and state residents from harmful toxics and we have a chance to leverage a once in a generation opportunity to secure federal dollars.

Climate Protection

The legislature must do its part to advance climate justice and secure a healthy climate future for our children by fully funding an equitable clean energy economy. The **Resilient Buildings Policy Package (SB 868, 869, 870, 871, HB 3166)** leverages federal funding to improve efficiency of homes and buildings; supports healthy, affordable, resilient communities and family-wage job creation across Oregon (\$20.2M). The **Natural Climate Solutions (SB 530)** bill supports Oregon forestland owners, farmers, and ranchers to implement climate-smart land management practices, improving the resilience of Oregon communities and natural resource economies (\$21.5M). And the **Oregon Climate Goals Modernization (SB 522)** aligns Oregon's long-outdated greenhouse gas reduction goals with current science and supports staffing and representation on the Oregon Global Warming Commission (\$775,835).

Transportation

Cars and trucks emit nearly 40% of Oregon's climate pollution and many families struggle with the cost of transportation. The **Oregon Clean Vehicles** program is an answer to both of these problems; however, it was suspended on May 1st, stopping a key mechanism that allowed everyday Oregonians to purchase an EV. A one-time funding allocation (**HB 2613**) is needed to help the program come out of suspension and maintain current service levels through the next biennium. Other critical bills are **HB 2571** which creates a **rebate for electric bikes** and **HB2714** which gives **heavy duty trucks** an opportunity to harness federal funds to transition to electric vehicles.

Toxic Free Cosmetics

While there has not been an agency budget request on toxics reduction, we urge this committee to support **SB546 (Toxic Free Cosmetics Act)** that if passed, would require a very nominal investment upon the bill's effective date, to limit toxic exposures from cosmetics.

Clean Drinking Water

Oregonians are drinking polluted water right now. State agencies are unable to adequately implement programs for protecting water quality due to funding shortages. We must provide sufficient funding to ensure that our available water resources are drinkable, swimmable and fishable – now and for future generations. **HB3207** would help create an **early warning system to identify potential contaminants in well water**. The cost for implementation of this measure according to LFO would be \$306,554.

State Agencies

Lastly, we must do our best to ensure state energy, environmental, and natural resource agencies are adequately resourced to implement **existing** programs and policies, like Oregon's cornerstone Climate Protection Program. We also have an unprecedented opportunity to leverage federal funding that will maximize benefits for climate, jobs and justice policies. On the latter, we're currently working with many of the committee members to help identify these specific areas of funding, and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time in considering our requests, we look forward to continued engagement in the upcoming weeks and being a resource.

Respectfully,
Thomas Baker
Legislative Director
Oregon Environmental Council
thomasb@oeconline.org