



February 18, 2025

Rep. Susan McLain, CoChair
Sen. Chris Gorsek, CoChair
Oregon Joint Committee on Transportation

RE: Oppose HB 2642

CoChair McLain, CoChair Gorsek and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

For the record, my name is Susan Allen, and I represent the over 39,000 Oregon AFSCME members who live in all counties of Oregon and work in city, county, state and community based institutions to support Oregonians lives by maintaining roads, keeping communities safe, providing healthcare and behavioral health, and protecting our clean air, water, land.

Oregon AFSCME opposes HB 2642. If passed, the bill requires that all seven of Oregon's Clean Air Stations will close, and further specifies that emissions enforcement would be contracted out to the private sector. Oregon AFSCME believes that this State program is a good example of right-sizing programs to ensure a high level service which comes from the institutional knowledge and worker pride in State public service.

Now, more than ever, it is important to recognise good efficient work, where Oregonians have access to the programs where needed with strategic State investment. Cutting all state positions in the two airsheds, or maintenance areas reflected in Portland and Medford would all but guarantee having to rebuild infrastructure at a time when Oregon does not need to reinvent the wheel.

These communities have historically exceeded the EPA guidelines, or been identified with Nonattainment, which means that a geographic area has not consistently met the clean air levels set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. It is also important to identify that both communities have conditions leading to lasting inversion layers, making air quality an issue for those with existing conditions, seniors, and the medically vulnerable.

There are six testing stations in the Portland area and one in the Medford area. The total number of FTE that would be laid off would be roughly 75 people who work on location and some stationed at the technical center which provides facility maintenance, IT and support to those clean air stations.

The late Senator, Peter Courtney frequently described Oregon as the State of "...firsts and onlys", so it is important to note that Oregon has developed a unique and efficient way to manage emissions in this program.

Additionally, we were able to find a cost analysis of this program from roughly five years ago, which stated: "Oregon's program is the only program in the nation that is offering both self-service testing and a public-private telematic OBD partnership." The report further identified that states with privatized emissions regulation programs cost up to three times of Oregon's program.

Finally, this DEQ program enjoys excellent ratings from busy Oregonians. VIP offers every customer, no matter when a test is performed, the opportunity to report on their experience via a 10-question comment card. DEQ VIP receives thousands of customer responses annually from this approach. The results reveal that greater than 97% of customers rank DEQ VIP as "good" to "excellent". The program uses this information to gauge its overall effectiveness, and to identify ongoing opportunities for improvement. Comment cards and results are routinely shared with station managers and staff, and any items of concern or opportunities for improvement are promptly addressed by the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify why this key DEQ program reflects a prudent investment by delivering quality value for Oregon communities. This program is a great example of Oregon building an efficient model that meets the needs of Oregon, both in customer service and management of key Oregon airsheds.

Please oppose HB 2642.

Susan Allen

Political Coordinator
Oregon AFSCME