

Office of Emergency Management Office of Sustainability



March 13, 2025

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for House Bill 3492

Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

We are writing to express our strong support for House Bill 3492. This bill represents a crucial opportunity to enhance our state's preparedness for the potential risks associated with earthquake induced dispersion of respirable hazardous materials.

The opportunity to analyze inhalation hazards statewide opens the door to proactive measures that can help to secure the safety of our communities. We applaud this first step in understanding the hazards which could impact Oregonians and feel the outcome of HB 3492 can better allow jurisdictions to prioritize hazards and the limited resources when responding to catastrophic events. Addressing our seismic vulnerabilities requires collective effort to make significant steps toward a more resilient state of Oregon.

Engaging local emergency management agencies and allowing for collaboration with relevant entities in this effort is vital for the success of HB 3492. Including their insights and expertise will help to ensure that the findings are effectively integrated into local emergency response plans, enhancing overall community resilience.

A previous comprehensive report prepared by Portland State University for Multnomah County outlined risks which this bill can examine further. In the report on toxic inhalation hazards within the county, seventy (70) Multnomah County facilities were identified which could be vulnerable to extreme seismic risks, including soil liquefaction and lateral spread. These facilities often use pre-existing non-conforming tanks that are likely to fail during a seismic event. By identifying high-risk facilities and their proximity

to populated areas, we can better prepare for emergencies and develop effective response plans tailored to our unique geographic challenges.

The danger of seismic events and the subsequent failure of facilities containing hazardous materials extends beyond Multnomah County to the entire state of Oregon. HB 3492 aims to address this issue statewide, providing the same opportunity for analysis to other counties across Oregon. This initiative will benefit not only Multnomah County but also many other counties at risk.

We have a valuable opportunity to prevent a disaster. We urge you to support the passage of House Bill 3492, as it is an important first step in safeguarding our communities.

Sincerely,

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Submitted by Tom Powers

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