



March 13, 2025

**TO:** House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

**FR:** Sharla Moffett, Oregon Business & Industry

**RE:** HB 3107

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Chair Lively and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Sharla Moffett, senior policy director for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians.

HB 3107 would provide greater definition and feasibility for permit applicants to use Oregon's existing receipts authority. OBI supports HB 3107 to facilitate more timely issuance of permits.

Permitting is at the core of DEQ's work and is the primary way that Oregon's air, land and water are protected. Issuing permits in a timely fashion and minimizing the number of expired or administratively extended permits is important to permittees for myriad reasons, but it is also important in upholding public trust that Oregon's natural resources are protected.

This bill shouldn't be necessary but businesses need permits to operate in a manner that is protective of these resources and the fact is that there are major challenges with permitting timelines at DEQ. Permit applications can take years rather than months to process and issue--and even permit modifications, on average, take nearly a year to issue.

OBI has often pointed to permitting programs in other states as examples of why businesses are less likely to invest in Oregon. States like Georgia, South Carolina, Ohio have been the recipients of business investments that could have come to Oregon due to an increasingly complex regulatory framework and protracted permitting timelines.

However, we don't even have to look outside of Oregon for a better permitting model. In the chair's own county, the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency issues permits in a fraction of the time under the same rules and fee schedule as DEQ. I emphasize this point because regulatory stringency to protect the environment and public health does not automatically equate to regulatory complexity or slow permitting timelines.

Businesses take regulatory requirements very seriously and want to comply with the terms of their permits. However, a business's ability to take advantage of a market opportunity or expand existing operations is greatly hindered when a permit cannot be issued in a timely fashion, which creates major business uncertainty.

HB 3107 could ease permitting timelines to help businesses move permits forward more expeditiously without adding to the significant permit workload at DEQ.

We want to note for the committee that this does not relieve the permit applicant of any obligation to pay DEQ the appropriate fees for a permit application or ongoing fees, so it does not deprive the agency of funding. However, it essentially has permit applicants paying twice for to get one permit issued. Utilizing the authority in this bill would be helpful to companies with the resources to use it, but the greater problem is that DEQ's permitting processes needs systemic change so that . Regulated entities already pay very substantial fees to the agency and many businesses, irrespective of size, do not have the resources to pay twice for one permit. However, this is especially true of small businesses.

All permit applicants should have equal access to an efficient and timely permitting process. However, unless and until these persistent and chronic permitting challenges at the agency are addressed, HB 3107 offers an additional path forward to obtaining permits that businesses must have in order to operate.

Thank you.

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