



April 10, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB 5520 - DEQ 2025-2027 Biennial Budget

Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Emerson Levy, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources,

On behalf of the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA), I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 5520, which outlines the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) 2025-2027 biennial budget. This critical funding impacts the daily lives and health of more than 382,000 residents in Lane County through cleaner air, reduced health risks, and healthier communities.

SB 5520 Support

LRAPA fully endorse SB 5520's air quality funding approach of DEQ, which allocates approximately \$168 million across general funds, fee-based, and federal funding sources. These investments collectively enhance LRAPA and DEQ's ability to serve Oregon and Lane County residents and maintain critical statewide air quality protection infrastructure.

Tangible Items for Lane County Residents

The DEQ funding that flows to LRAPA directly improves citizens' lives through:

- **Reduced health risks for vulnerable populations:** Seniors, children, and those with respiratory conditions benefit from air quality management that reduces emergency room visits and missed school/workdays.
- **Enhanced community resilience:** Every Lane County resident benefits from advance preparation for wildfire smoke events through public outreach, education, and smoke management coordination.
- **Economic stability:** Lane County's economy benefits when businesses can navigate air quality requirements efficiently, maintaining both jobs and environmental standards.

How DEQ Funding Translates to Direct Constituent Benefits

DEQ's irreplaceable funding to LRAPA (\$443,514 in the LRAPA's proposed annual budget for FY'26) directly provides Lane County citizens with:

1. **\$269,514 in State General Fund contribution:** This funding ensures that every Lane County resident has access to local air quality expertise, complaint response services, and neighborhood-specific solutions that a centralized state agency couldn't provide. When a resident smells a concerning odor or sees visible emissions, this funding enables rapid local response and resolution.
2. **\$164,000 from the PM2.5 103 Grant:** This funding maintains the air quality monitoring network that delivers hourly air quality data online accessible by residents' phones and computers, allowing families to make informed decisions about outdoor activities, especially for children, seniors, and those with respiratory conditions. During wildfire season, this real-time data becomes a critical health protection tool.
3. **\$10,000 from the PM10 Public Education Grant:** The \$14,332,814 from federal funds for air quality (Section 5) enables Oregon to leverage federal resources for both statewide and regional air quality improvements, with a small but important portion flowing to LRAPA.

LRAPA's Operational Capacity and DEQ Support

LRAPA's proposed FY 2025-2026 budget of \$7,127,971 demonstrates our commitment to efficient and effective air quality management. With a staff of 20 full-time equivalent positions, we are strategically positioned to address current and emerging air quality challenges. Our budget includes:

- \$3,587,293 for General Fund operations
- \$725,060 for Special Revenue (Title V) Fund activities
- \$2,873,044 for Grant Fund, passthrough dollar, initiatives

Wildfire Smoke: An Emerging Concern for Oregonians

As wildfire events become more frequent and intense, Lane County residents increasingly depend on timely information and guidance to protect their health. Currently, this critical public service remains vulnerable without dedicated, ongoing legislative support despite its growing importance to public health. The DEQ funding in SB 5520 helps fill part of this gap, but additional targeted resources for wildfire smoke management would further protect vulnerable residents.

LRAPA-DEQ Partnership

The collaboration between LRAPA and DEQ delivers direct benefits to citizens through:

- Faster response times to air quality complaints and concerns
- Local knowledge that informs effective and tailored solutions
- More efficient use of taxpayer resources through complementary expertise
- Greater accessibility for residents who need air quality information and assistance

Recognition of Citizen Benefits

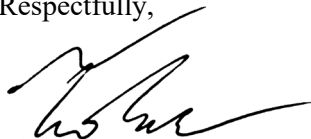
Oregon Business & Industry's 2025-26 Oregon Competitiveness Agenda specifically highlighted how LRAPA's service to citizens is a model which has created regulatory certainty and efficiency for local businesses. This perspective from the state's largest business association underscores how effectively serving citizens creates a healthy environment for both families and the economy but requires sustained public funding and support.

Conclusion

I urge your support for SB 5520 as a critical investment in the health and wellbeing of Oregon citizens. This budget directly improves the quality of life for Lane County residents by providing clean air that is fundamental to public health and economic prosperity. The state's investment in DEQ and the funding that flows to local agencies like LRAPA delivers measurable health benefits and improved quality of life for Oregonians across our communities.

Thank you for your consideration. LRAPA stands ready to provide additional information about how this funding directly benefits the residents of Lane County, and other Oregonians.

Respectfully,



Travis Knudsen
Executive Director
Lane Regional Air Protection Agency