

Submitter: Rick Varnum

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5520

Co-chairs Frederick and Levy, members of the Committee, for the record my name is Rick Varnum and I am a resident at 1310 East 20th Avenue, Eugene, OR 07403.

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 5520, a bill that would provide biennial funding for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Ever-worsening climate impacts across the state have made clearer than ever the need to reduce emissions and protect Oregon communities on the frontline of climate impacts.

At the same time that Oregonians and communities across the country are facing climate disasters and rising energy costs, the federal government is advancing dangerous rollbacks to climate and environmental justice protections. These rollbacks will have real and harmful consequences for Oregon families, our economy, and our environment—today and for generations to come.

With the cascade of federal rollbacks underway, DEQ's work to restore, maintain and enhance the quality of Oregon's air, land and water has never been more critical. Strong implementation of Oregon's cornerstone Climate Protection Program, Clean Fuels Program, Clean Truck Rules, and other DEQ programs are essential to ensuring a healthy climate future and continued growth in Oregon's clean energy economy.

I urge you to ensure that DEQ is well resourced to implement these essential programs to help us meet our climate goals while reducing air pollution, improving public health, delivering benefits for Oregon jobs, families, and the economy. For these reasons, I strongly urge your support of POPs #111 and #170, which will support funding for Oregon's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program and address Critical Resource Gaps to address resource deficiencies and chronic underfunding affecting critical agency services and functions as highlighted in a 2024 Secretary of State audit.

With federal climate funding at risk, we must not stop our work to continue reducing emissions, improving air quality, and ensuring that all Oregonians, especially frontline communities, have the resources needed to adapt to the impacts of climate change. With that in mind, I urge you to prioritize continued investments in key legislatively-established incentive programs that DEQ is responsible for implementing: the Medium and Heavy Duty Electric Vehicle Rebates & Infrastructure Grants and

Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program / Charge Ahead program. By accelerating the adoption of electric trucks and vehicles, these programs are delivering cleaner air, better public health, and improved economic mobility for Oregonians.

Please support DEQ's ever-vital work in advancing Oregon's climate goals, ensuring healthy, resilient communities, and supporting clean energy job growth across Oregon by supporting a strong agency budget and voting yes on SB 5520.

Thank you for your time.