

Submitter: Chris O'Neill

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or SB5520
Topic:

Co-chairs Frederick and Levy, members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 5520, a bill that proposes biennial funding for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). I have lived in Eugene since 1976 and along with other old-timers, have felt the direct impact of increased atmospheric heat over the years. Let me explain.

I used to leave the windows open in summer and with a fan or two the hottest days were tolerable. But not anymore. Weeks-long periods of severe heat and wildfire smoke intrusions have forced me to purchase air filtering devices for the two levels of my house, and late last year an air circulation system that doesn't require drawing smoky air from outside. Altogether that cost me just shy of \$15,000. I can't imagine the health problems these conditions cause for my neighbors who can't afford personal protective measures that I've made.

Given the deliberate organizational chaos in Washington, D.C.—I don't mean that ideologically; just reading the news—the federal government, at least in the short term, is no longer a reliable partner to help reduce the climate effects of industry or to mitigate the negative impacts of increasing temperatures and extreme weather events. We have to rely on our state agencies like DEQ to help protect our environment as best we can. That's why I support a strong budget for DEQ.

And I ask you, too, to support a strong DEQ budget as if you and your family's health depends on it. Because it does.

Sincerely,
Chris O'Neill
Eugene