



4145 NE Cully Blvd., Portland, OR, 97630 | 503-290-8570

April 14th, 2025

To: [Joint Subcommittee On Natural Resources](#)

Re: Support SB 5520

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy, and Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Xitlali Torres, and I am the Air Quality and Climate Justice Coordinator at Verde. I am writing to express our support for SB 5520.

The staff that I have worked with at DEQ are competent and thoughtful, and I am grateful for the attention paid to equity and environmental justice in their programs and decision-making processes. They take their regulatory role very seriously, with expertise and professionalism, so I am happy to advocate for the continued funding of essential programs to protect human health and the environment.

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. Oregonians feel the impacts of the quality of their environments and of climate disasters, through rising energy costs, illness caused by pollution, missed days of school and work, increased anxiety, damage to their homes and crops, and more. The federal government is advancing dangerous rollbacks to climate and environmental justice protections, so now is a critical time for Oregon to maintain its duty to protect the future of Oregon's air, land, and water quality. Our most vulnerable communities are on the frontlines; they cannot afford to have our agencies waver in their work to reduce emissions, improve air quality, and ensure all Oregonians have the resources to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The funding we talk about today is what ensures our environmental well-being into the future. I will uplift some of the topic areas that are most important for Verde's work and for the frontline communities we serve.

The success of the Climate Protection Program and Energy Intensive Trade Exposed Entities. This year, the Environmental Quality Commission re-established the consequential Climate Protection Program. At this time, key manufacturers were exempted for three years to give time for a DEQ rulemaking to modify requirements to prevent leakage (when regulated entities leave



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the state due to regulation). This work is supported by industry and environmental advocates alike. Updated rules would establish facility-specific carbon-intensity baselines for each. This policy approach is preferable because it still incentivizes decarbonization while allowing key manufacturers to stay and grow in Oregon.

Decarbonizing is not a walk in the park, but it beats the consequences of inaction by a long shot. DEQ anticipates requiring 3 full-time permanent positions (2.25 FTE in 25-27) \$886,674 General Fund*, an Environmental Engineer (1.5 FTE), and a Natural Resource Specialist (0.75 FTE) to complete this work.

Transportation

I urge you to prioritize continued investment in DEQ programs related to transportation. Incentive programs have shown success, so I urge you to prioritize continued investment in the Medium and Heavy Duty Electric Vehicle Rebates & Infrastructure Grants and the Oregon Clean Vehicle Program. I will also highlight POPs #111 and #170 to support our Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program and Address Critical Resource Gaps as highlighted by the 2024 Secretary of State audit. These programs are necessary for Oregon's success, from meeting its climate goals to delivering cost-saving benefits to low and moderate-income households across Oregon.

Water

Water is an essential resource for life to exist, and water quality must be prioritized for healthy environments and communities. Therefore, I will also uplift POP's #120, #121, #181, and #500. The Agency needs to maintain fee-funded water quality programs, continue to support the water infrastructure grants and loan programs, especially the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan, and improve the Housing Production Framework. I would also like to uplift POP 170 in the ARG to develop and implement a backlog of necessary clean water plans. Funding critical water and infrastructure programs empowers communities by providing much-needed resources, protects public health by ensuring clean and affordable water for all Oregonians, and builds resilience by preparing water systems to withstand future climate impacts. Clean water is also important to the economic health of Oregon. Clean water means a healthier workforce, housing production, higher property values, and better business.

In conclusion, we strongly support a robust budget for the DEQ to ensure a healthy environment for all. Thank you for your consideration,

Xitlali Torres
Air Quality and Climate Coordinator
Verde



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