

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support for SB 992

Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Levy and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment,

My name is Representative Travis Nelson, and I represent House District 44, North and Northeast Portland. I am here testifying specifically about Section 9 of Senate Bill 992, which incorporates policy I introduced in HB 2921 to address real concerns from my constituents in North Portland.

This work stems directly from a situation within my district in the St. Johns neighborhood. ORBC purchased a property intended to replace the Delta Park Bottle Drop without prior community engagement or an approved application through the OLCC. When the community learned about the project, they raised deep concerns about its proximity to homes, dangerous traffic conditions, public safety issues, and the impact on long-standing efforts to revitalize the neighborhood. Constituents suggested locating the Bottle Drop in an industrial zoned location because North Portland has many industrial areas located close to neighborhoods. An industrial location would still be accessible to the community with wide variety of transportation options including public transit and bike routes. These locations are better suited to meet this specific community's needs.

This experience has been a learning opportunity for all involved – for ORBC, for policymakers, and for communities. It revealed important gaps in our existing statutes around the siting of full-service redemption centers. Section 9 of Senate Bill 992 addresses these issues directly. It clarifies that full-service redemption centers can be located in commercial or industrial zones, offering needed flexibility while ensuring access to services. This is especially true for those who have districts like mine, where there is a significant number of industrial areas. It also adds to statute the requirement for ORBC to notify the state Senator and Representative of their community engagement plan before submitting an application to OLCC. It also ensures that the OLCC provides an opportunity for public comment and may consider that input when deciding whether a center provides a convenient service to the public.

Since this issue came to light, my office, other legislative offices, ORBC, and the City of Portland have been working collaboratively to identify alternative locations that better meet community needs while ensuring that convenient service remains available. Those conversations are ongoing, and we are committed to finding solutions that work for everyone.

At its heart, Section 9 reflects what my constituents asked for: transparency, respect for community voices, and a thoughtful approach to decision-making that puts people living in the community first. I urge your support.

Thank you,

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland