



Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
SB 1008 Hearing  
Wednesday, March 8, 2017

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A non-profit which seeks to protect the health of all Oregonians by reducing toxic air pollution.

Chair Dembrow, Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of SB 1008.

It's time.

Since 2001, the State of Oregon has recognized the harm that exhaust from older diesel engines poses to the health of all of us who live in Oregon and, as a result, has engaged in efforts to promote the turnover to readily available cleaner diesel engine technology.

In 2007, when a new national diesel engine standard was required that achieved an incredible 95% reduction in harmful pollution, Oregon's Environmental Quality Commission implemented in the state's [administrative rules](#) a mandate to reduce excess lifetime cancer risk from diesel exhaust exposure in Oregon to no more than one in a million by 2017.

While DEQ continues to administer grants within its funding limitations to this end, our overall performance is far from impressive: the State of Oregon has not funded diesel engine upgrades since 2009, it missed a state goal to upgrade all diesel school buses by 2017, and has allowed 23 of 36 Oregon counties to exceed the state health benchmark for diesel pollution.

When compared with other states' efforts to reduce exposure to diesel particulate, including Washington and California, Oregon's efforts to curtail diesel pollution are clearly underfunded and lack adequate regulations to actually phase out dirty diesel engines. From 2002-2015, Washington has upgraded 1,400 diesel engines, most notably its school bus fleet and major transit fleets. By comparison, in that same period Oregon complete a whopping 369 diesel engine upgrades. In California, forward thinking diesel policy means that all trucks and buses will run 95% cleaner by 2023, because they are required to. Our neighbors' successes show that it healthier air from less diesel engine pollution is possible - it is only due to a lack of political will here in Oregon that we failed



to meet our own goal of reducing excess cancer risk from diesel exhaust exposure to no more than one in a million by 2017.

But there is some good news! We have the rare opportunity during this 2017 legislative session to correct course. 2016 saw an unprecedented call to action from Oregonians demanding the state establish health protective air quality standards. While the resulting Cleaner Air Oregon rulemaking process is tackling the complicated effort to overhaul *industrial* air pollution permits, it is left in your hands, as legislators, to establish the health standard for the diesel, the pollutant that threatens the lives and well-being of more Oregonians than any other air pollutant. This task is all the more urgent because diesel engine emissions are up to 3 times higher in communities with the highest percentages of low income and people of color, populations that have been historically underrepresented in decision making and in the benefits of environmental regulations in our state, while paying the highest cost in health problems related to exposure. In short, it is in your hands to take action to end what must be called environmental racism. I ask you to stand up in this committee for racial justice. In these times, you know how pressing and overdue such action is.

SB 1008 establishes a standard for diesel engine exhaust and, importantly, a deadline for compliance. Which is exactly what is needed. And the fact that Oregon has up to \$80 million from the VW diesel emissions fraud settlement to put on the table toward compliance with new emissions standards for all diesel engines makes it even more clear that the moment to act on this is now.

Thank you.