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April 3, 2023

Chair Helm and Members
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources & Water
State Capitol
Salem, OR

Re: HB 2659

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

1000 Friends of Oregon opposes HB 2659. This bill would repeal the Climate Friendly & Equitable Communities (CFEC) program adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) in July 2022 and effectively means that no rules directed at reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by designing healthier, more equitable communities would ever be adopted.

The CFEC program places more affordable and equitable housing choices that are served by transportation options at the center of how our major cities are planned, built, and funded. The CFEC program is aimed at the state's 8 major urban areas, and helps them to tackle both the climate crisis and housing crisis with urgency—and in ways that deliver more equitable outcomes to Oregonians who have faced generations of discriminatory systems and historic barriers to services. It is designed to be implemented in phases by 2029, with options for extensions.

HB 2659 would prevent the CFEC rules from going into effect; tell LCDC to go back and have another rulemaking process; prohibit any new rules from being adopted before 2028; require local government approval; and the eventual implementation, if any would be in the next decade. This means Oregon would continue to fall far behind meeting its GHG reduction targets, to the detriment of Oregonians and the environment.

Almost 40% of Oregon's GHG emissions come from the transportation sector, and most of that is from driving cars and light trucks, in the state's major urban areas. The CFEC program is aimed at providing more choices in how we get around and where we live, by integrating land use and transportation planning and investments to reduce the need to drive, or to drive as far.

However, the CFEC program is not just about mitigating climate change. It also increases public health by providing safe and accessible walking, bicycling, and transit options and reducing air-polluting driving. It saves Oregon families money – transportation costs are the second most expensive category for most households, after housing, due to the cost of owning and operating a car. Driving one's car fewer miles or owning one less car is a big savings. It meets the needs of more Oregonians, by encouraging housing located within walking distance of the

things people need to frequently get to – like school, stores, and services. Over 25% of Oregonians do not or cannot drive, due to age, health, costs, or physical limits, and that group is increasing. These walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods mean they are not isolated in their homes.

All Oregonians deserve access to walkable, bikeable neighborhoods with low-cost and safe transit and diverse and affordable housing choices. Current transportation and land use plans and investments do not serve the needs of marginalized populations, and lead to unaffordable housing, lack of housing choices, and prioritization of cars over people. They also do not get us to our greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. In fact, many transportation plans are projected to increase GHG emissions from Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) over the coming years.

To change this, Oregon needs the CFEC program, now. The program has broad, state-wide support. It was guided by an historically diverse advisory committee and represents a delicate balance between urgency and flexibility achieved over two years of discussions, negotiation, compromise and public engagement. While this particular rulemaking has been going on for two years, it is really over a decade in the making, and long overdue.

The legislative direction for this rulemaking began in 2007, when the Oregon Legislature adopted statewide goals to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions from all sources. It continued with legislation in 2009 and 2010, which together funded the Portland Metro area and the Eugene/Springfield area to each develop and adopt a land use and transportation scenario (“scenario plan”) that reduces GHG emissions from cars and light trucks to meet the region’s fair share target of the statewide GHG reduction goal. Metro has adopted and is *successfully implementing* its Climate Smart Strategy, while the Eugene/Springfield area developed a scenario plan but did not adopt it. The legislation also established the state-level technical capacity to support the other major urban areas to undertake similar planning to link land use and transportation to reduce transportation-related GHG emissions.

With the CFEC program, we have *finally* taken significant steps to reach Oregon’s transportation-related GHG reduction targets by planning and investing in more walkable, equitable, affordable communities. Many local governments have already started implementing the CFEC program with initial funding from DLCD and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Local governments need continued funding to finish that work, which we are advocating for separately.

We urge you to support taking meaningful action to address climate change, and to not pass HB 2659. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Mary Kyle McCurdy, Deputy Director