

Oregon House of Representatives
Committee on Water

Testimony HB 2488

March 8, 2021

Robert Collin

Good morning Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Helm, Vice Chair Smith and Committee Members Kotek, Moore-Green, Owens, and Pham,

My name is Robert W Collin, testifying in my personal capacity.* I am aware of with the thousands of hours of hard work the community members volunteered toward this Bill, and some of the non profit organizations who dedicated time and staff for this Bill; all in a time of COVID and with a threadbare capacity. Beyond Toxics has regularly presented testimony to the Environmental Justice Task Force (on which I serve) for over 10 years. In that context I relied on them to bring Environmental Justice community voices.

Why Support This Bill Now?

HB 2488 presents incremental, small, and affordable steps to beginning to create accountability for greenhouse gas emissions; and to protect and include vulnerable communities in land use decisions. It does so in the context of the state wide planning goals, which are integral to land use in Oregon. This bill is also step in the direction of action within the current GHG framework.

HB 2488 fits in both contexts; Oregon Land Use Planning Goals, and the emerging and growing GHG environmental policies. These 2 contexts are merging, as evidenced by Governor Brown's recent Executive Order 20-04.

Adding climate change goals and metrics, and enhancing current goal on Citizen Participation, are all necessary to prepare our communities for the climate changes that come and prepare and prevent the burdens on vulnerable people. I strongly endorse Section 4, developing an internal Environmental Justice advisory

committee, because it will help prepare, protect, and plan state and local land use decisions that include vulnerable people.

Legislative Policy, Climate Change, and Land Use Controls

There is a balance between action and inaction on all climate change policy and land use is no exception. The impacts of a traditional policy approach – the no action alternative – result in accumulative impacts on vulnerable people as well as the environment. Climate change exponentially increases the focus on inaction and action.

However, without climate change as a stated public purpose the tension between action and inaction will continue to increase. It is intrinsic to land use controls. Climate attribution science connects human activity, climate change, and extreme weather patterns with increasing accuracy. Vulnerable people are generally most affected, first affected, and worse affected by many climate changes.

Costs of Climate Change Controls

There are heavy and increasingly unavoidable costs, leaving legislators few options. HB 2488 is a step in the direction of action and will empower those communities especially impacted by climate change. There will be a need for resources because it's a new inclusionary process.

These costs are coming anyway. New inclusionary land use processes protective of vulnerable communities are a necessary part of climate resiliency. The state is between local, and federal, intergovernmental relationships, often evidenced by MOUs between state agencies and regional offices of federal agencies.

Both the long term commitment to resources and coordination required is too much for local governments in Oregon. Our communities and ecosystems cannot wait for federal resources for land use planning.

Our state legislature is between local governments which can not afford it; and resources from the federal government which are vague.

This increases the focus on inaction directly at the state level. Many options for climate change public policy now seem drastic and expensive even at the state level.

HB 2488 offers an incremental step toward action with minimal costs. And it helps move both prongs of EO 20-04 forward; GHG emissions controls and protection of vulnerable communities.

Thank you for your time and service.

Respectfully submitted

Robert Collin

***I started studying state land use laws of Vermont, Hawaii and Oregon in the early 1980's while in graduate Planning school; and then again in an LIM program. One of my mentors there, Professor Robert Freilich, was an attorney in the Oregon case of Fasano on quasi judicial decision making. We incorporated all state land use legal issues in his Land Use Planning casebook. Oregon land use policies have been studied closely for decades.**