



Coalition of
Communities of
Color

February 11th, 2021

To: House Committee on Housing

RE: Oregon House Bill 2842, Healthy Homes

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan, and members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color to express our strong support for House Bill 2842. Formed in 2001, the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) is an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations with representation from African, African American, Latinx, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic communities in Oregon. CCC works to improve outcomes for communities of color through policy analysis and advocacy, environmental justice, culturally-appropriate data and research, and leadership development in communities of color.

We wholeheartedly support the passage of House Bill 2842. Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the stark health inequities across racial and socioeconomic class lines. Communities of color are disproportionately burdened by chronic illnesses such as asthma, and toxic air quality from the recent wildfires in Oregon has exacerbated this health inequity. Now, more than ever, we see the importance of living in a safe home that provides warmth, light, and refuge from disaster.

Housing directly affects health outcomes - housing safety and stability can support mental and physical health and reduce burden of disease. This is specifically important for Black, Indigenous, and people of color, as these communities tend to face disproportionately high rates of living in substandard housing.ⁱ This bill will ensure that all Oregonians can live in safe homes by creating the Healthy Homes Program and Healthy Homes Repair Fund. The Healthy Homes Program addresses the need for funding for home upgrades, repairs, and retrofits that will help make homes safer and more energy efficient. By directing this funding to low-income households and landlords, we can ensure that much-needed home improvements are happening in the houses across the state that need them most. More efficient homes can lead to lower energy costs for residents, and home repairs such as lead abatement and smoke filtration/air purification system installations can lead to fewer sick days. HB 2842 creates opportunities to ensure that our neighbors, families, and communities can benefit from living in healthy homes regardless of income, race, or socioeconomic status.

HB 2842 will also create a platform for state agencies to coordinate, collaborate, and efficiently leverage resources from home improvement programs. The Interagency Task Force on Healthy Homes will help improve access to the program to maximize benefits to under-resourced and overburdened communities. We are proud to be part of the effort to pass this policy and strongly urge a “yes” vote on HB 2842.

Sincerely,

Nikita Daryanani
Climate and Energy Policy Manager
Coalition of Communities of Color

ⁱ Jacobs, David E. Environmental Health Disparities in Housing. December 2011.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3222490/>.