



March 8, 2021

Dear Chair Power, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Sollman, and Members of the House Energy & Environment Committee,

My name is Ira Cuello-Martinez and I am the climate policy associate at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. On behalf of PCUN, I am testifying in support of HB 2488 to achieve equity and climate justice in Oregon's land use.

At PCUN, we represent Oregon's farmworkers and low wage Latinx workers. Many of our community members work the land in this state, but are often left out of any decision making spaces when it comes to land use. Furthermore, farmworkers are one of the first people to feel the impacts of climate change as the summers become excessively hot. The current climate crisis is a direct result of the racial and socioeconomic inequities that exist in our systems and have left out our communities from meaningfully engaging in land use decisions.

The current consultation and inclusion in land use decision-making is often inadequate and insufficient in scope. The pollution and other environmental risks associated with these decisions are too often placed on the communities that can least afford to adapt for them. For instance, one thing that comes to mind is Covanta incinerator located in Brooks, OR. In addition to carbon pollution, the incinerator emits toxic heavy metals, bio-accumulative organic toxins, and dioxin, all of which have negative health impacts to the surrounding areas which are predominantly low-income communities and communities of color in Woodburn and NE Salem including the farmworkers we serve.

The decision to place this incinerator in the middle of where a lot of low-income communities live and work was done without sufficient consultation. This is only one example describing the need to add a single new statewide land use planning goal—Goal 20—to ensure that climate, equity and environmental justice are addressed in our statewide land use planning decisions.

Now, you all have the opportunity to make the long-needed reforms to our statewide land use planning goals. If our state is to adequately confront the challenges presented by the climate crisis through an equitable approach then we need a planning system that is up to the task.

For that reason, I urge you to support HB 2488—Equity and Climate in Land Use, to ensure that Oregon's land use planning system includes a comprehensive and rounded approach to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, equity, hazard risk reduction and environmental justice.

Thank you,

Ira Cuello-Martinez  
Climate Policy Associate  
PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union