



March 8th, 2020

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

If our state is to confront the challenges presented this century by the climate crisis and systemic environmental racism, then we need a planning system that is equipped for the task at hand. For that reason, we 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.

I write today on behalf of 350PDX. We are a Portland-based organization working to build a diverse grassroots movement to address the causes of climate disruption through justice-based solutions by inspiring, training and mobilizing people to act. While our land use planning system has long been a nationwide model for responsibility, we’ve got a blind spot when it comes to climate change and environmental justice: we don’t consider climate change within any of the 19 statewide land use planning goals. The climate crisis is here, and many of its early impacts - extreme heat and cold, intense wildfire seasons, and catastrophic winter storms - are already devastating communities on the frontlines of the crisis and other overlapping injustices. In this moment, we cannot afford to ignore a single tool in our toolbox, and this includes our land use planning system. A single new statewide land use planning goal—Goal 20—would ensure that climate, equity and environmental justice are addressed in our statewide land use planning decisions at the scale our future demands.

Local governments have been and are currently making critical decisions regarding comprehensive plans, urban growth boundaries, and urban and rural reserves without sufficient consideration (if any) of either the projected climate impacts of land use decisions within their jurisdiction or whether these decisions will help achieve Oregon’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. According to the U.S. Global Change Research Program’s Second State of the Carbon Cycle Report (2018), ‘Emissions from the urban built environment are directly shaped by societal factors, including regulations and policies governing land use, technologies such as transportation, and indirect factors such as demands for goods and services produced outside city boundaries.’”

Further, we know that the climate crisis did not emerge out of a vacuum: it is both a product of and exacerbates existing racial, social and socioeconomic inequities. Oregon’s Native American governments and tribal communities, Black, Latinx and other people of color, as well as low income and under-resourced rural communities, have told us time and again that our current planning system simply does not serve them. Consultation and inclusion in land use decision-making processes is often inadequate

and insufficient in scope. Pollution and environmental risks and hazards are too often situated in the communities that can least afford and are least equipped to cope.

We therefore strongly support the passage of HB 2488 to update Oregon's Land Use Planning System to address climate change, environmental justice and equity in the planning system in a holistic and integrated manner, which is the only way to prevent climate responses from reinforcing existing inequities. We also urge the members of the House Energy and Environment Committee to indicate their support for the recommended budget of \$800,000 to both initiate and finish the adoption of a new Goal 20 for Equity and Climate in this biennium. There is positive forward movement in securing funding in that the Department of Land Conservation and Development included \$800,000 in Package 90 for Equity Initiatives as part of their proposed agency budget (see SB 5530). In addition, in order to provide adequate technical assistance to underserved rural communities and smaller cities and counties, a recommendation from the House Energy and Environment Committee for additional funding allocations would be appreciated.

HB 2488 will guarantee climate and equity-responsive land use planning by Oregon's local governments and ensure that Oregon is prepared for the unique challenges of our century.

Thank you for considering my comments and creating a just and climate-resilient future for Oregon.

Sincerely,

Indi Namkoong
Coalition Manager
350PDX