



**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation
re: HB 2642**

February 20, 2025

**Kristopher Fortin Grijalva, Transportation Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council**

Re: Oregon Environmental Council oppose HB 2642

Dear Co-chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the undersigned groups committed to protecting the health of Oregonians and our environmental health, we write to urge you to vote no on HB 2642 and support DEQ's authority to protect air quality by keeping with them the power to implement vehicle emission testing. HB 2642 is a bill that seeks to divest the authority to administer vehicle emission testing away from the Department of Environmental Quality, to the private sector.

Emissions testing in Oregon began in the mid-1970s as a method of reducing air pollution from trucks and cars in order to ensure compliance with the landmark federal Clean Air Act of 1970. The Clean Air Act, and its implementation through emissions testing, has been a [major success story](#) of environmental regulation to protect public health as air quality has drastically improved since its inception. This reduction in toxic air contaminants and improvement in air quality directly benefits the public health of Oregonians. Toxic air pollutants produced from vehicle emissions contribute to a [variety of health issues](#) including cardiovascular disease, increased cancer risk, upper respiratory system irritation, adverse developmental and reproductive effects, and anemia.

DEQ's implementation of emissions testing has proven to be effective at reducing these toxic air pollutants that are so harmful to public health. Under DEQ the testing program has effectively incentivized owners of older vehicles to maintain their cars enough to meet emissions requirements, illustrated by the fact that 1 in 4 cars are repaired in the 90 days prior to their emissions test.

And while cars are much cleaner today than when testing began, the program under DEQ's administration is still having a significant impact on air quality. DEQ found that even among newer cars that are 5 to 6 years old, twelve percent would have failed emission testing without repairs done in the month before testing. Additionally, in 2023 DEQ estimated that the program reduced criteria and hazardous air pollutants by 10 to 20 percent in the Portland and Medford areas. Further, a 2022 study showed that pollution from tested cars in Oregon pollute 44 percent less carbon monoxide and 45 percent less nitrogen oxides compared to untested vehicles.

In addition to being effective at reducing air pollutants, DEQ's implementation of testing has been demonstrated to be well administered from the perspective of customers and is cost-efficient. [According to DEQ](#) the average wait time for emissions testing is 10 minutes, and 97% of customers rated their experience at a DEQ Clean Air Station as good or excellent. [In recent years](#) DEQ's testing program has cost the Oregon taxpayer nothing as it is [100% fee funded](#) through the fees drivers pay for the certificate demonstrating their car's compliance with the emission standards. And this funding is distributed equally among those tested because since the fee is associated with the certificate of compliance, if a driver's car fails the test, there is no fee for the driver to pay. Therefore, a driver can test as many times as needed before they have improved their vehicle to a suitable level in order to pass.

We urge you to support DEQ's authority to protect air quality, and keep with them the power to implement vehicle emission testing.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our input.

Sincerely,

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Oregon Environmental Council

On behalf of:

Mackenzie Springer, Transportation Advocacy Manager, Neighbors for Clean Air
Carrie Nyssen, Senior Director of Advocacy, American Lung Association
Lisa Bentson, President, League of Women Voters of Oregon