



NORTHEAST COALITION  
OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Department of Environmental Quality  
700 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 600  
Portland, OR 97232-4100

August 2, 2018

RE: Recommendations for Strengthening Clean Air Oregon Rules

Dear Department of Environmental Quality,

Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods is a non-profit that represents 12 densely populated neighborhoods situated in a wedge of northeast Portland that is bordered on three sides by heavy industry, freeways (I-5 and I-84) and freight lines. As such our residents are some of the most impacted in the state by the effects of industry and auto pollution—and we don't even know all of the toxins residents may be exposed due to the historical lack of mandatory reporting and monitoring for all businesses. We are optimistic that this can change and believe SB 1541 was a first step in the right direction.

However, we have several concerns about the proposed rules. Here are our recommendations for addressing areas where we feel the proposed rules are lacking or unclear and need revision. These changes will benefit all Oregonians by eliminating loopholes and raising standards to improve air quality sooner rather than later.

1. Eliminate the exemption for small businesses. While large businesses may draw the most attention as sources of air pollution, small businesses can be heinous polluters as well. Size should not be the determining factor for regulation, but actual emissions and to effectively regulate emissions DEQ must measure emissions of businesses large and small. On a neighborhood level, pollution emitted by small businesses, such as auto body shops or glass factories in northeast Portland, pose a significant threat to public health both because of the toxics they emit and their proximity to large residential neighborhoods.
2. Air monitoring should be mandatory and conducted without prior notice. By requiring monitoring and conducting it on a surprise basis, DEQ can check that emissions inventories match actual emissions to keep businesses honest and build trust with the public.
3. Require the lowest achievable emissions rate for new facilities. Adopting the LAER standard, signals to businesses that public health is a priority in Oregon and will discourage those businesses that pollute the air from establishing facilities in Oregon.
4. Establish response time requirements for DEQ in the permitting processes. DEQ must adhere to a timeline to prevent businesses from delaying compliance until benchmarks sunset. Creating a timeline will also help hold polluters accountable for delays in implementing of risk reductions.

5. In assessing emissions, use the most recent and health protective values. It is both appropriate and necessary to use the most health protective values in determining risk action levels, a move which will establish public health as a first priority.
6. Lastly, we call on DEQ to publish a searchable emissions inventory on-line in a format that is accessible to the layman, so that the public can understand what they are breathing, just as water bureau and other agencies provide both published public summaries and real-time data for on water quality.

As an organization that advocates for livability for all of our residents we want to remind you that the burden of air pollution is on our most vulnerable community members including children, the elderly and often historically disadvantaged populations. It is imperative that historical inequities are not perpetuated by failing to address the public in a timely manner. Therefore, we also request that DEQ continues to engage the community and responds to the issues raised through the public comment process by publishing a plan to do to address these comments and requests.

On behalf of the 55,000 residents in the NECN neighborhoods, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Clean Air Oregon rulemaking and hope that you will take seriously and incorporate our proposed changes.

Sincerely,



Mariah Dula  
President of the Board  
Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods