



Eastside Portland Air Coalition

For Immediate Release

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Air Quality Advocacy Groups Ask for Governor's Attention to Upcoming Cleaner Air policy meetings

Portland, OR, 9/19/2016 Eastside Portland Air Coalition (EPAC) and Beyond Toxics, two organizations appointed to the Cleaner Air Oregon Policy Committee are openly expressing concerns about the Governor's Cleaner Air Oregon Initiative process. They are asking the Governor, Oregon Health Authority and Department of Environmental Quality to clarify uncertainties and address procedural gaps before the work of the Cleaner Air Oregon Advisory Committee begins.

In a letter to the Governor and state agencies, air quality advocacy groups from across the state applauded Governor Brown for her bold creation of the Cleaner Air Oregon project, a directive to state agencies to create health-based air regulations following the recent revelations about decades of uncontrolled heavy metal pollution from Portland glass manufacturers. As public health advocates appointed to the Cleaner Air Oregon Advisory Committee, healthy air advocates identified several issues of concern in the Charter language. EPAC and Beyond Toxics, on behalf of many other air advocacy groups across the state, request the following issues be resolved prior to the first meeting on October 18, 2016:

1. The Governor's Support

Request that Governor Brown attend the first meeting.

The Governor's presence relays the message to the public that the Advisory Committee is not merely symbolic, but warrants direct and personal attention, public engagement and transparency.

2. Potential Conflicts of Interest

Request disclosure of potential conflicts of interest be addressed immediately.

Due to the powerful influence of business and government interests, there is concern that the odds are already stacked against public health advocates and the general public.

3. Scope of CAO-AC Recommendations

Allow the Advisory Committee to be free to explore policy options that are not prescribed, and may emerge from alternative approaches.

4. Operational Language

Provide clarification of operational language and procedures to ensure that public health voices are not overshadowed by attorneys and lobbyists hired by industrial polluters.

"We want to be assured that the Governor's mandate is upheld, that this process has teeth and will actually facilitate the statewide, health based reform the public is demanding and the Governor promised. We have been poisoned too long by the pollution free-for-all from industry in Oregon." -Katharine Salzmann of Eastside Portland Air Coalition and neighbor of Bullseye Glass.

The Cleaner Air Oregon Regulatory Overhaul, created by Governor Brown this year was in response to the air toxics crisis surrounding Bullseye Glass and Uroboros. Since February Eastside Portland Air Coalition has been working in a coalition with Beyond Toxics and other groups to promote statewide regulatory overhaul ensuring that all Oregonians breathe safe and clean air.

Oregon is one of the most negligent states in the country when it comes to regulating air toxics. Multnomah County is in the top 1% of counties in the US for cancer caused by air toxics.

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