

# Oregon's air-quality rules weak

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Companies complaining about Oregon's proposed upgrade of our state's air quality rules forgot to mention some essential facts to The Register-Guard ("Quality concerns," Dec. 18).

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce claimed that Cleaner Air Oregon will be an "undue hardship" but neglected to mention that Oregon's air quality-rules are far weaker than other states.

From Washington to New Jersey, states have adopted stronger regulations that work out to be feasible, practical and result in measurable air quality improvements.

The biggest change in the proposed Cleaner Air Oregon rules is, for the first time, air pollution will be regulated on the basis of human health benefits.

Decreasing the risk of cancer and other diseases caused by breathing dirty air is Oregon's new goal.

A second detail is that Oregon will require all polluters to report the toxic chemicals from their smokestacks, something Eugene has successfully required for years. Industries would prefer their pollution stays their secret.

A new focus on business accountability requires polluters to meet with downwind residents to discuss the health risks of their toxic emissions. Thus, communities can give meaningful input prior to pollution permits.

Everyone knows protecting health strengthens the economy and business innovation creates jobs.

Lisa Arkin

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