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To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for this opportunity to write in support of reauthorization of the Clean Fuels Program.

As a Physician Assistant, I once worked in a huge, busy emergency room and in family medicine. Today I represent 2,000 medical professionals and public health advocates with Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. We work together to prevent the most grave threats to human health and survival. We advocate for a rapid transition to a low-carbon, clean energy economy.

The lesson that I and so many other health professionals have learned well:

Prevention is key.

Through our actions, we prevent disease and death and we can prevent increases in medical costs.

For us, adoption and implementation of the Clean Fuels Program is a public health priority.

Why? Because climate change is a public health emergency.

CO2 increases in our atmosphere are radically changing the climate of our planet.

You are likely aware of an increase in extreme weather and storms including flooding. With flooding comes, dislocation, disease, and death.

But do you know that extreme heat causes more deaths than any other type of extreme weather event?

- In California in 2006, over two weeks time, there were 600 deaths, 1,600 hospitalizations, and 16,000 emergency room visits.
- In Russia in 2010, heat and wildfire killed 56,000.
- The average number of extreme heat days is predicted to be 8 times higher by the end of the century.
- Heat related mortality is predicted to at least quadruple by 2050.



For us, adoption and implementation of the full Clean Fuels Program is also a priority because of its local and direct impacts.

Gasoline emits harmful air pollution and diesel kills.

Diesel particulate matter is associated with:

- impaired pulmonary development in adolescents;
- increased cardiopulmonary mortality and all-cause mortality;
- measurable pulmonary inflammation;
- increased severity and frequency of asthma attacks, ER visits, and hospital admissions in children;
- increased rates of myocardial infarction (heart attack) in adults;
- increased risk of ischemic stroke; and
- reproductive and neurodevelopmental disorders.

Oregon DEQ's Portland Air Toxics model for 2017 shows that diesel particulate pollution may exceed health-based bench marks by over 10 times.

These health problems affect all Oregonians, but disproportionately impact children, the elderly, low-income communities, and communities of color.

That is the bad news.

The good news? You can do something about this.

- Prevention is key.
- Action can be taken now.
- The Clean Fuels Program can help protect Oregon's and the Earth's future.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment in support of reauthorization of Oregon's Clean Fuels Program.

Regna Merritt, PA  
Healthy Climate Campaign Director  
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility

