



Portland's Role on Clean Air

In 2018, Multnomah County and the City of Portland commissioned a study called "[Ensuring Healthy Air: Local Collaborative and Regulatory Options in the Portland, Metro Area](#)" to evaluate whether to establish a local clean air authority. The study concluded that it does not make sense to create a local air authority and replicate the role of the Department of Environmental Quality at the local level. However, the study identified important roles for local government to help fill gaps between state and federal action, particularly to develop a collaborative multi-agency strategy to advance programs to reduce air pollution and improve community education. The study recommended that the City and County explore funding sources to address this need.

The Problem

The most significant air toxics concerns in Oregon are in Multnomah County and Portland. [The Portland Air Toxics Solutions \(PATS\)](#), conducted by the Oregon Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) and published in 2012, found that "the Portland region has the highest risk (in Oregon) to the population from air toxics due to business and population density." Moreover, "monitoring studies confirm the presence of air toxics at levels that can cause adverse health effects." Modeling conducted during this study analyzed the environmental justice impact of air toxics in the region and found that communities of color and low-income communities are at greatest health risk.

The City of Portland currently does not have an air quality program nor the resources to hire air quality experts. However, the PATS study documents the unique air pollution mitigation needs for Portland and Ensuring Healthy Air identified the role for local government. Local jurisdictions need to work together at the regional level and in collaboration with DEQ and our public health and educational partners like Portland State University (PSU) and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) to improve air quality, namely by focusing on diesel emissions, smoke (from woodstoves and



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wildfires), on-road transportation emissions and support DEQ's program to reduce industrial emissions.

Proposed Clean Air Protection Program Outcomes

The intended outcomes for a City of Portland Clean Air Protection Program, in collaboration with DEQ, Multnomah County, Metro, PSU, OHSU, community organizations and businesses, include:

1. Cleaner air contributing to decreased rates of asthma, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and cancer over time, especially for impacted communities. Work to ensure the Portland region stays in compliance with National Ambient Air Quality standards. This will be achieved by:
 - Implementing policies and projects identified in the Ensuring Healthy Air study to reduce emissions and exposure from key areas with high density of sources and impacted populations living or working in proximity.
 - Supporting programs to address nexus of clean air and climate resilience, such as:
 - Expand access to air filtration and cooling systems.
 - Address tree disparities in neighborhoods in partnership with Parks and BES.
 - Provide safe and cooling community centers for heat and wildfire events, prioritizing East Portland.
2. Communities and businesses have access to increased resources to reduce air pollution, including technical assistance. This will be achieved by:
 - Initiating a Clean Air Grant Fund to reduce community exposure to air pollution
 - Supporting industry and community in developing Good Neighbor Agreements.
3. Reductions in exposure to pollution from motor vehicles, construction equipment, residential wood combustion, wildfire events, and heat with a priority focus on most impacted communities. This will be achieved by:
 - Implementing policies and projects identified in the Ensuring Healthy Air study
 - Coordinating with local, state, and regional partners to maximize clean air results and resources, such as supporting Multnomah County on residential wood smoke ban and woodsmoke reduction programs by helping with communication and additional resources
 - Expanding work to reduce diesel emissions and support MWESB access to grant funding for exhaust retrofits and engine conversions.
 - Supporting Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on state regulatory programs and rulemaking
 - Partnering with C40 Air quality Network and other national and international cities on actions and seeking to bring investment to Portland
4. Improved community understanding of air quality data and information and communication methods that are responsive to different community needs. This will be achieved by:



- Developing data tools for communities to gain insights and information about air pollution (past sources and levels, current sources and levels, and potential future exposures) to increase community capacity and technical expertise to engage in permit processes and propose technological solutions more effectively.
5. Improved access to data and information for City staff across bureaus to inform engagement, project, and policy decisions, like Transportation and Freight Planning. This will be achieved by:
- Using air pollution assessment methods to understand disparate impacts and increased health risks of air pollution on different communities.
 - Developing data tools and perform project level analyses for City staff. Run air pollution modeling and health risk analyses for projects and scenarios for policy decisions. Identify needs and synergistic work of partner agencies, community organizations, businesses, and researchers to improve accessibility of such tools.

The Proposed Funding Solution

To establish a Clean Air Protection Program to respond to this need and implement the above actions, Portland is developing a policy proposal to raise the required revenue through a Clean Air Surcharge. The proposal covers approximately 71 facilities in the City of Portland who hold Simple or Standard Air Contaminant Discharge Permits (ACDP), or Title V permits with Oregon DEQ, beginning in 2023, for the 2022 tax year. Proposed surcharge levels are shown in the table below.

Air Permit Holders	Description	Estimated number of facilities subject to fee	Emissions subject to fee (tons)	Base fee	Per-ton fee	Annual revenue
Simple ACDP	Fixed annual fee for each permittee	28	n.a.	\$20,000		\$560,000
Standard ACDP	Fixed annual fee for each permittee	25	n.a.	\$20,000		\$500,000
Title V	Fixed annual fee plus per ton fee on regulated pollutants subject to DEQ fee	18	3,000	\$20,000	\$250	\$1,110,000
						\$2,170,000

The Program will be overseen by a new Clean Air Advisory Committee that will make recommendations to the BPS Director on policies and projects to improve local air quality and adopt methods to measure program effectiveness. Clean Air Advisory Committee members will be appointed by the Director and paid an annual stipend. Members will represent the City’s overall geographic and racial diversity, with at least three members either working or living in neighborhoods with the highest levels of air pollution.

