



Memorandum

Date: February 13, 2023

To: Mayor Vinis and Eugene City Council

From: Eugene Sustainability Commission

Subject: Public Health Overlay Zone – Statement of Support

The Eugene Sustainability Commission urges the Eugene City Council to create a Public Health Overlay Zone to protect public health, specifically in West Eugene. We believe this concept should be implemented wherever residential zoning abuts industrial zoning with impacts from airborne toxics. This can help end the historical pattern of approving zoning codes and land uses that place industrial polluters adjacent to homes or adding neighborhoods around heavy industry where lower income residents have become concentrated.

The recommended strategy for a Public Health Overlay Zone effectively creates buffer zones between homes and specific industrial uses and would ban heavily polluting industries from being developed within city limits. It would also strengthen noise, vibration and odor rules, public meeting requirements, and other development standards to ensure community awareness and participation in future developments.

A Public Health Overlay Zone would show the residents of West Eugene that their health and wellbeing are valued by our elected leadership. This type of overlay zone has already been researched and implemented in the Clear Lake Overlay Zone, and there is evidence that this strategy can be effective at reducing the impact from air toxics on residential neighborhoods.

We urge the Eugene City Council to consider a public health overlay zone as one strategy to separate residential and heavy industrial zoning, to create robust strategies to mitigate the cumulative impact of localized air toxics, to focus specifically on protections for underserved West Eugene residents, and to improve air quality for all residents of Eugene.

Respectfully,

The Eugene Sustainability Commission