

**Testimony to the House Energy and Environment Committee
on Carbon Pricing
(House Bills 3470, 3252 and 3250)**

April 14, 2015

**Margaret Tallmadge, Environmental Justice Manager
Coalition of Communities of Color**

The mission of the Coalition of Communities of Color is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity. Formed in 2001, the Coalition is an alliance of 20 culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from six communities of color: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic.

The Coalition supports an equitable carbon pricing program in Oregon that will 1) offer protection from disproportionate financial impacts while, 2) creating economic opportunities for communities of color and 3) supporting more resilient communities.

Communities of color make up 25% of Oregon's population, including 40% of children aged zero to five. Additionally, people of color's support for the environment is generally higher than the white population— on average 20% higher than white Americans¹. While climate change is a major threat to the quality of life for all Oregonians, it has a disproportionate impact on the physical, mental, financial and cultural wellbeing of communities of color and low-income communities. Persistent problems include lack of access to green spaces, healthy foods, employment and transit; worse air, soil and water quality in proximity to our most ethnically diverse neighborhoods; increased temperature in urban heat islands contributing to illnesses and deaths; degradation of air quality linked to asthma and cardiovascular disease; and a limited ability to respond to increasing costs of energy, housing and food. Our children and communities are already bearing the brunt of environmental and economic inequities— such as housing in high traffic pollution corridors—and our lives are literally more threatened by climate impacts than the average Oregonian.

Oregon must do more to address climate change and must design and pass equitable carbon management policies. Doing so is a win-win: we have a unique opportunity to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to yield direct economic and environmental benefits in communities most vulnerable to impacts of climate change. But this won't happen by itself. We must be intentional about creating these opportunities. We should maximize connecting new and existing job training and entrepreneurship support efforts within

¹ Pew Research Center



community economic development organizations to investments in residential clean energy and green infrastructure.

Other examples of equitable policies include:

- Monthly financial assistance to the lowest-income household--those on fixed income or living paycheck to paycheck. Annual rebates don't work for everyone.
- Prioritizing carbon pollution reduction efforts to maximize health benefits for communities of color.
- Creating a community investment fund, as was done in California under SB 535.

The Coalition of Communities of Color supports an equitable carbon pricing program in Oregon that protects households and communities from impacts, reinvests a portion of the revenue to provide economic opportunities, supports more resilient communities, and makes the policy development and implementation process inclusive and accountable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Tallmadge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Margaret Tallmadge
Environmental Justice Manager
Coalition of Communities of Color