



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

April 14, 2015

Cory L. Murphy, PAALF Executive Director
Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF)

The Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF), established in 2009, is a convener of African American leaders around a public policy agenda that impacts the community in the areas of housing & economic development, education, health, and civic engagement/leadership. In 2010, African Americans represented at least 7% of Multnomah County's population, with a population substantially younger than the rest of the County.

PAALF asks the State of Oregon to take action and reduce the harmful impacts of climate change on African American communities and families in Oregon. To reduce climate pollution and improve the wellbeing of our communities, we support carbon pricing programs with strong equity and environmental justice provisions.

African American communities are and will continue to be disproportionately impacted by climate change in Oregon. Evidence shows that people of color and low income communities tend to live in areas with higher toxic air emissions, brownfields and other environmental hazards. An African-American child is four times more likely than a white child to die of an asthma attack. Weather disasters in the United States have increased fivefold in last 30 years. African American communities and communities of color are at the frontline. The State of Oregon must take action to prepare and protect our communities and families against these kinds of climate pollution impacts, now and for future generations.

The disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities of color are compounded with the limited ability for communities of color to invest in mitigation measures, such as well-designed or retrofitted housing, and green infrastructure. Fortunately, equitable carbon pricing policies present an opportunity to both mitigate harm caused by climate change and to reinvest in African American communities and communities of color-- those least able to cope with increased costs related to climate solutions. The State of Oregon must ensure tools for carbon regulation will not disproportionately impact communities of color.

An equitable carbon pricing program in Oregon will offer protection from disproportionate financial impacts, create economic opportunities for communities of color, and guarantee an inclusive and accountable policy development and implementation process. We believe with equity and environmental justice policies at its core, an Oregon carbon pricing program will create opportunities for good, family wage jobs, better transportation options, improved health outcomes, and more resilient communities.

PAALF encourages the State of Oregon to pass an equitable carbon pricing program.

Sincerely,

Dr. T. Allen Bethel
PAALF Executive Co-Chair

Cory L. Murphy
PAALF Executive Director