

**Testimony to the Senate Environment and
Natural Resources Committee
on Senate Bill 1574
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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council strongly supports SB 1574, the Healthy Climate Act, to further climate action and leadership in Oregon. Climate impacts are already affecting citizens, industries, and special places in Oregon and it is long past time to act.

Oregon needs comprehensive, economy-wide climate policies that limit climate pollution (including all greenhouse gases that contribute to climate destabilization) down to levels scientist say are necessary, and that account for the true costs of pollution.

Climate action is good for the economy

Climate pollution is a drag on our economy. It is wasteful and harms Oregon businesses and households. Oregon's natural resource heritage is particularly at risk and Oregon industries, like shellfish and snow-based tourism, are already being damaged by climate impacts.

Strong clean energy and climate policies that put enforceable limits on climate pollution exist throughout the world. In the U.S., we have two successful programs that have effectively used cap-and-invest market mechanisms to limit climate pollution while maintaining robust economies:

- California has had a comprehensive climate law since 2006 and a cap-and-invest program in place since the beginning of 2013. During the first two years of the program, the state's economy has thrived with jobs in California growing by 3.3 percent from January 2013 to June 2014, outpacing the rest of the nation.
- In Northeastern states (called RGGI, or the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative): A consortium of 10 states established the first market-based climate program in the U.S. in 2008. According to The Analysis Group, RGGI has generated \$1.6 billion in economic growth, investment in energy efficiency are creating \$1.3 billion in consumer energy savings, more than 16,000 net jobs have been created, and reducing fossil fuel imports has kept \$756 million in the regional economy.

Boost jobs, create opportunities

Climate policies can and should be designed to support local communities by boosting and creating clean economy and community development and correcting for historic inequalities.

We need public investment to accelerate the transition to low-carbon technologies and a portion of carbon revenue should be directed towards reducing climate pollution. In order to transition off of high-carbon fuels, we need large-scale investment in clean economy infrastructure. A smarter, more efficient grid; electrification of large parts of the transportation sector; distributed-, community- and utility-scale renewable energy; expanded transit; and energy

efficiency and demand response upgrades in all sectors of the economy. This transition will require well-paid skilled labor, creating employment opportunities for Oregonians throughout the state. Public investment in retooling and retraining will help speed this transition.

Similarly, climate policy must be designed to be equitable. Climate policies can help correct the historic imbalances for disadvantaged communities. Communities of color and low-income households are already disproportionately harmed by climate pollution and will continue to be into the future without dedicated action. Many members of these communities are exposed to higher levels of traffic and industrial pollution (the same sources as climate pollution) that harms lung, heart and brain development. Nor are these communities equally benefiting from clean energy development. Equitable climate policies and programs can provide targeted investments into these communities, creating jobs and quality of life improvements. To achieve this, equitable climate policy should have dedicated revenue for disadvantaged communities, with community input and oversight for how funds are distributed.

Oregon is not doing enough

While Oregon should be proud taking action to reduce carbon pollution, we are far from reaching our scientifically-based statutory climate limits:

- Our transportation sector is heavily dependent on single-passenger, gasoline powered vehicles and freight emissions are growing the most.
- Homes and commercial buildings are not being built to the highest standards for energy efficiency, to be renewables-ready, or to easily accommodate electric vehicles.
- Public transit does not adequately reach all communities who want and need it.
- Climate pollution is freely emitted and society as a whole has to pay for the consequences, which costs our state billions.
- Oregon families, natural resources, and businesses are at risk from the impacts of climate change.

Climate change already costs our state budget

Recent record wildfire seasons have eaten into the state budget. The State of Oregon's wildfire insurance premiums are spiking upward just as we face the potential for another historic season. The state has also spent money studying and helping oyster farmers adapt to rising ocean acidity, caused by increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. 2015 just because the hottest year on record. Snow pack and precipitation are at historic lows in some parts of Oregon. How much will droughts cost us this year and into the future?

Oregon will have to build resiliency for some climate impacts. However, it is much more cost-effective to deal with the root cause of the problem by reducing climate pollution. Oregon should put its full force into adopting strong climate policies and urge other states and national leaders to join us.

Oregonians support climate action

Oregonians from all walks of life and all corners of the state support action on climate change. The 2013 Oregon Values and Beliefs survey showed that 72% of Oregonians support actions to address climate change from across the state – eastern and western Oregon. Over 500 Oregon based businesses have signed the Oregon Business Leadership Climate Declaration calling for state and regional climate action. There is a growing groundswell of support from local elected officials, farmers, parents, faith-leaders and individual citizens calling for climate action in Oregon.

The Oregon Environmental Council, on behalf of our members throughout Oregon, urges strong support for SB 1574.