

Honorable Chris Edwards,
Chair, Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
900 Court Street NE,
Salem, Oregon 97301

Feb 1, 2016

Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee,

We are here today to express our strong support for SB 1574, the Healthy Climate Act of 2016.

Our group of about 50 members came together a year ago because we were scared. Scared of the atypical weather we are starting to experience in southern Oregon. Weather like the high wind tropical storm on February 6th last year that dumped 3 inches of rain in 24 hours, toppled thousands of trees and caused landslides that closed Highway 66. The Back to back summers of drought bringing catastrophic wildfires including the Oregon Gulch Fire in 2014 that burned 30,000 acres in 3 days, six miles from our home. Last year's spring that came 3 weeks early followed by our first fall frost that was 5 weeks later than normal. Wells at our neighbors that for the first time in 60 years went dry. For us, climate change isn't some far away anomaly, it is right here in Oregon and it is threatening the livelihoods of thousands of Oregonians.

The name of our small but determined group is Hair on Fire Oregon because we see climate change as singlehandedly the most urgent threat humanity has ever faced. We believe passionately that we can and **must take action** on climate before it is too late.

Last session we found ourselves in Salem multiple times promoting the Healthy Climate Act's predecessor HB 3470. The members of our group heard the powerful testimony given by Secretary Rodriguez (California Air Resources Board), Sean Penrith (The Climate Trust), and Quebec Minister of Sustainability David Heurtel at the House Energy and Environment hearings—all describing the remarkable, positive economic impacts states like California have experienced by capping and reducing greenhouse gas pollution, implementing social justice climate programs and transitioning to a clean energy economy.

Since last session, Hair on Fire Oregon joined more than 18 concerned groups across the state whose sole focus has been to work with you, Senator Edwards, and others in the legislature to come up with a solid comprehensive bill and mechanism that can give Oregon a path to a similar positive outcome. The Healthy Climate Act is the culmination of our efforts and is an incredibly exciting piece of legislation that would enforce Oregon's carbon pollution reduction goals, transition the state toward clean energy, and invest in economically disadvantaged communities.

We have heard legislators question whether this bill should be passed in the short session. To that we would like to remind the esteemed members of this committee that **WE CANNOT AFFORD TO WAIT!** The costs to do nothing are far too high. The science says that we must reduce our GHG pollution by 7% per year starting NOW. Every year we wait, that percentage goes up.

The Healthy Climate Bill, provides an umbrella under which 85% of Oregon's pollution must be capped and reduced over time. While not perfect, it starts us on the path to providing the long overdue price on carbon pollution to counter the social costs of compromised health, escalating extreme weather events, wildfires and an overheated planet. The consequences of failing to act on climate could not be higher.

In 2014, The Climate Trust prepared a Policy Paper for the Oregon Legislature titled: [An Evaluation of Potential Carbon Pricing Mechanisms for the State of Oregon](#). The following chart, from that report, depicts the potential harm to various economic sectors in Oregon if no action is taken to price carbon and stem the flow of greenhouse gas pollution. These sectors, which include Forestry, Agriculture, Fisheries and Tourism account for \$48 billion of Oregon revenue. We can attest here in Southern Oregon, we are already experiencing “warmer, drier summers” and “reduced winter snow pack in the Cascades.”

Threat:	Leading to:	Valuation of industries affected:
Warmer, drier summers	Drought Heat waves Wildfires Disease and pest increases	Forestry: \$12.7B ⁴ Wine: \$2.7B ⁵
Sea level rise along coast	Erosion Flooding	Coastal Real Estate: No information available
Reduced winter snowpack in the Cascades	Increased water prices Increased irrigation needs Decreased tourism	Agriculture: \$23B ⁶ Tourism: \$9.2B ⁷
Increased ocean acidity	Algae blooms Biodiversity changes	Salmon fisheries: \$6.7M ⁸

These impacts will be significant and costly. The report goes on to say that “...continued worldwide inaction, could cost anywhere from 5-20% of global GDP each year to perpetuity, while action would cost only 1%.”

SB 1574, creates a proven mechanism that can take Oregon from inaction to action. Proceeds from a carbon market will further drive innovation, help disadvantaged communities, create a Just Transition Fund and benefit rural counties facing real climate challenges and shift Oregon to a new clean renewable energy economy. It improves our health, provides clean energy jobs and paves the way for a sustainable future.

For you on this committee, the time for action is now. The planet is reeling and we will continue to feel those effects both in Southern Oregon and across the state. As we move forward, we encourage you to see the hope that will be generated by allowing Oregonians to be pro-active and throw our backs into doing something that will help mitigate the increasing uncertainty our children and future generations are facing.

We encourage you to check out the [Trust 350 film](#) made by Our Children’s Trust and the incredible work that Mary Wood and Julia Olsen are doing right here in Oregon! It is time we ask, don’t we have an obligation to our kids and future generations to protect the basic life support systems of the planet?

There is NO MORE important bill being considered than this one in the 2016 session. Please join Oregon’s legacy of courageous leaders and pass SB 1574 – the Healthy Climate Act of 2016. If not for yourselves, then please do it for your grandchildren.

Thank you,

Deb Evans and Ron Schaaf
Hair on Fire Oregon
Ashland