

KARIN POWER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 41
MULTNOMAH AND CLACKAMAS COUNTIES



April 3, 2017

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Helm, Vice Chair Johnson, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Representative Karin Power. I represent Milwaukie, Oak Grove, and parts of SE Portland. I am speaking in support of HB 3269, a bill which would modernize the Global Warming Commission.

Despite existing since 2008 and having a membership of 25, featuring various industry and agency leaders, the Global Warming Commission is not part of common environmental policy vernacular. In part, because of a lack of resources, and in part, because of the name, this commission has been working largely in obscurity. In sincerity, I had not heard of the commission prior to taking on this bill, and neither had several of my professional colleagues. That is significant given my employment and environmental law background.

As with most unstaffed commissions, the body is what the members make of it. For the last decade, the Global Warming Commission has primarily worked with the Oregon Department of Energy to meet its statutory obligations. The commission has been successful in chronicling their history, progress, biannual reports to the legislature, and recommendations on a centralized website, keeporegoncool.org. However, it could do much more.

HB 3269 modernizes the commission by changing its name to Climate Change Commission, as global warming is just one piece of overall climate change, and cleans up statute accordingly. The bill expands duties of the commission to have a focus on better coordination of programs and activities, in order to increase the effectiveness of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It also has a focus of better coordination with agencies of state government, defining that agencies involved with the commission should establish responsibilities and tasks for carrying out recommendations of the commission. The bill directs agencies to establish benchmarks against which they may measure progress toward greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and adaptation and preparation outcomes. The benchmarks would be evaluated as necessary. The bill defines duties for nonvoting members of the commission, specifying that nonvoting members shall report regularly to the commission on energy and climate programs and activities of the agency or institution the member represents. Nonvoting members shall also evaluate and make recommendations to the commission on how best to coordinate state energy and climate programs and activities.

Finally, the bill requires the commission to appoint an executive director and appropriates general fund money to the commission for this purpose. Understanding our budget deliberations, the amount of this appropriation is currently left blank to be discussed and determined. We know that is a big ask right now.

We are nowhere near achieving our greenhouse gas emission reductions goals. In the absence of a directive to an agency to focus on the issue of climate change, the Global Warming Commission is a tool which can help guide us. It is vital we maintain and sharpen the commission.

I have some experts on the commission here with me today who can tell you more about why HB 3269 is important to pass. Colleagues, I would like to hear your thoughts on how we can best modernize and improve upon the commission. Thank you for hearing this bill.

Representative Karin Power

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