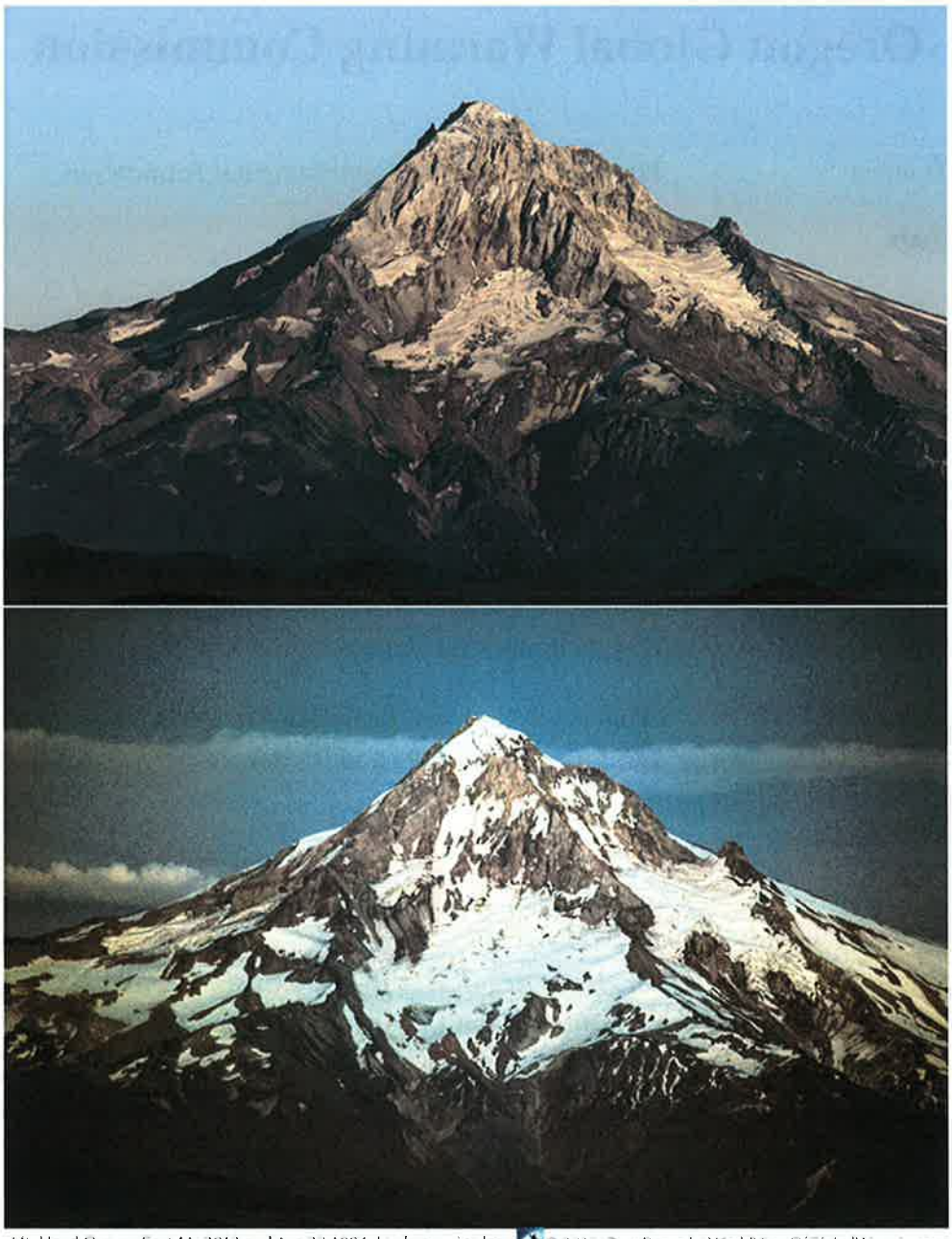

Mt. Hood Oregon Sept 11, 2013 and Aug 30 1984. Update on ice loss. © 2013 Gary Braasch • WorldViewOfGlobalWarming.org

Oregon Global Warming Commission
Biennial Report to the Legislature
2017

[Excerpt: Fixing State Climate Policymaking]

Oregon Global Warming Commission

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Vice-Chair

	Vacant

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Catherine Mater	President, Mater Engineering
Andrea Durbin	Executive Director, Oregon Environmental Council
Jill Eiland	Oregon Corporate Affairs Manager, Intel Corporation
Jim Piro	CEO and President, Portland General Electric
Gregg Kantor	President and Chief Operating Officer, Northwest Natural Gas
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Lisa Hanson	Acting Director, Oregon Department of Agriculture
Tom Byler	Director, Oregon Department of Water Resources
Peter Daugherty	Oregon State Forester
Lisa Hardie	Chair, Oregon Public Utility Commission
Vacant	Oregon State Legislature
Senator Bill Hansell	Oregon State Legislature
Vacant	Oregon State Legislature

*Two voting member positions of the Commission are vacant at the time of this Report

FIXING STATE CLIMATE POLICYMAKING

Key Takeaways and Recommendations for the Oregon Legislature

The State's climate policymaking machinery is not measuring up to the task of achieving GHG reduction goals and preparing the state for the effects of climate change. This failure is especially noteworthy for tasks not being informed by rigorous cost/benefit analysis, guided by agency assignments and benchmarks, and tracked for performance.

The Commission recommends that the Legislature direct agencies to collaborate with the Commission to set assignments (from the Commission's Roadmap) and benchmarks, and to report annually to the Commission on progress or lack of progress, and reasons why.

The Commission further recommends that the Legislature provide the Commission with modest but sufficient resources – staff and budget – to enable it to discharge its responsibilities in a timely and efficient way, including its analysis, communications and tracking functions.

Statement of the Problem

Oregon ought to be a national leader in advancing sound climate policy, and in many respects it is – in energy efficiency, renewables deployment, and urban transportation. These interim successes make the failures and blank spots more galling and less forgivable.

While individual agencies have taken up both emissions reduction and adaptation issues episodically, the State has no overall climate change adaptation/preparation strategy, action plan or investment criteria.

In 2016 Oregon made decided progress in addressing electric utility greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions,[1] but continued diligence is required to ensure our utilities are not replacing their reliance on one fossil fuel – coal – with overreliance on another – gas – to a degree that would ensure failure to meet Oregon's GHG goals. However, in the mid-term, limitations on the availability of firm on-peak carbon-neutral resources and on technologies such as storage to shape carbon-neutral resources will make it difficult for utilities to acquire carbon-neutral resources that are least cost & least risk solutions to meet their customers' firm on-peak energy requirements.

Oregon has limited State funding for the critical elements of transportation greenhouse gas reduction: electric vehicles incentives and transit/bike/pedestrian infrastructure, equipment and operations.[2]

Oregon has insufficient understanding of the carbon contributions – credits and debits – of our forests[3] and agricultural lands and activities.

Oregon doesn't keep systematic track of, or seek to manage, consumption-associated emissions (e.g., waste management).

Oregon has no integrated state GHG policy on non-carbon/methane GHG's (e.g., CFC's, Ozone, N2O).

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[1] SB 1547, passed in the short 2016 session, commits PGE and PAC to eliminating coal-generated electricity from Oregon's mix by not later than 2035 (and mostly by 2030), and increases the State Renewable Portfolio Standard for these utilities in steps to 50% by 2040.

[2] Per ORS 366.514, 1% of annual gas tax revenues are dedicated to bike, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure.

[3] In 2016 the OGWC undertook to develop a basis for carbon accounting in Oregon's forests, and that work proceeds, but slowly, reflecting again the absence of resources to proceed with more dispatch.

Oregon does not have a comprehensive current strategy for adapting to and preparing for the accumulating and already visible effects of climate change. Individual agencies and some communities have acted in this critical area, but their actions are isolated and often seriously dated.[4]

Oregon doesn't have a cost- and consequences-driven agenda of the most effective GHG abatement measures apart from an extremely modest[5] and dated analysis. When legislators ask if we're doing what's cost-effective first, we answer formulaically that energy efficiency is our priority (but even that's misleading since it's true primarily for electric and gas utilities, and not for other critical sectors such as transportation).

The Oregon Global Warming Commission was established by the 2007 Legislature and empaneled by Governor Kulongoski in 2008. The Legislature gave the Commission broad statutory responsibilities[6] but no authority and no operating budget. While the statute directed all State agencies to "support" the work of the Commission, that support is always subject to existing agency priorities for staff and budget. As a practical matter, the OGWC has had to rely on its own sparse resources, principally volunteer experts and funding raised from foundations.

These limitations notwithstanding, the Commission has provided significant value added to the State in numerous ways in its first eight years or so, often by acting as a stakeholder in prompting and shaping State agency work. At the end of this section we have provided a short list of the more important contributions made by the Commission.

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[4] In 2010 Oregon State agencies undertook a planning exercise that resulted in a published Framework for Climate Adaptation. There has been no further cross-agency work since; neither has there been any lookback review of whether any of the recommendations were acted upon, and with what outcomes.

[5] Oregon spent $50K of federal recession grant money on a "McKinsey" curve analysis that left much to be desired when it was current, a condition it left behind years ago.

[6] "The Oregon Global Warming Commission shall recommend ways to coordinate state and local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon consistent with the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals established by section 2 of this 2007 Act and shall recommend efforts to help Oregon prepare for the effects of global warming. In furtherance of the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals established by section 2 of this 2007 Act, the Oregon Global Warming Commission may recommend statutory and administrative changes, policy measures and other recommendations to be carried out by state and local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations or residents. In developing its recommendations, the commission shall consider economic, environmental, health and social costs, and the risks and benefits of alternative strategies, including least-cost options. The commission shall solicit and consider public comment relating to statutory, administrative or policy recommendations."

Remedy: Agency Accountability for Climate Action

This state of affairs has many causes which need not be belabored here. The remedy could be some combination of comprehensive enforceable emissions standards, and/or a cap-and-trade mechanism or carbon tax. In addition, but especially in the absence of any of these, there should be assignments to State agencies of principal responsibility for implementing aspects of the OGWC Roadmap, together with intermediate progress benchmarks and a reporting process that includes reasons for making or missing benchmarks. Reporting is not the same as directing; there need be no displacement of existing board and commission authority, still less of legislative oversight, which would be better informed with the fruit of the reporting.

This would, however, require a collecting-and-evaluation function that could be housed within a staffed OGWC that is authorized to negotiate benchmarks with agencies and require annual progress reporting. Initially working from the Commission's 2010 "Roadmap to 2020" (and revising as necessary), and with legislatively-adopted State emissions reduction goals[7] and adaptation/preparation needs, the Commission would:

1. consult with the State agencies in assigning primary responsibility for specific Roadmap[8] recommendations (and climate change adaptation/preparation recommendations, when completed); jointly with agencies, develop benchmarks where appropriate, and assign;
2. receive annual or biennial reports from the responsible agencies on progress on recommendations, or failure to make progress, and reasons for each;
3. evaluate these reports against goals and needs, and integrate commission findings into its Biennial Report to the Legislature in advance of each long session.

The Commission could request (but not require) similar reports from other parties (e.g., cities; Metropolitan Planning Organizations), following where recommendations lead.

The Commission would have no authority to direct State agencies, intervene between the agency and its governing board or commission, or compel any action. The authority would only be to assign responsibilities and receive annual progress reports. Since agency reasons for failure to make progress are often lack of resources or authority, this process is as likely

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[7] The 2007 Legislature adopted three emissions reduction goals: begin lowering emissions not later than 2010; be 10% below 1990 levels by 2020; and be at least 75% below 1990 levels by 2050. The OGWC subsequently recommended an interim goal: approximately 40% below 1990 levels by 2035.

[8] "Interim Roadmap to 2020" Recommendations adopted by the OGWC October 28, 2010 and submitted to the Legislature as the Commission's 2011 Biennial Report.

to provide support for an agency as to be critical of its progress while informing the Legislature of needs for implementation resources and tools.

Remedy: An OGWC Operating Budget and Resources

The Commission's ability to evaluate the work of the agencies, and to consolidate the information into a form usable by the Legislature and Governor, is close to zero today. The Commission's ability to pursue a substantive agenda – for example, the Forestry Carbon Accounting project now underway – is challenging, requiring almost entire reliance on the availability of volunteered expertise and without funding to support even minimal professional analysis. In particular, the Commission's inability to apply systematic cost/benefit analysis to the range of emissions reduction strategies and adaptation planning choices available to the state is costly and crippling.

The Commission is (ably) supported by ODOE at a 1/3 FTE level *when* there is not a pre-empting demand for that person's time and expertise.[9] The Commission has no independent funding to contract for technical expertise, and no budget for communications[10] or citizen involvement. The 2017 Legislature could elect to provide a small budget for minimal staff support (an Executive Director and a staff support position) and for a level of technical analytic support sufficient to review agency reports and perform independent analysis (e.g., of the economic feasibility and cost-efficiency of alternative approaches to GHG abatement).

Summing Up

- Oregon's GHG emissions are not under control, and both GHG abatement and preparation for impending climate change need systematic, not random and opportunistic, attention.
- Not all, or even the largest part, of Oregon's GHG emissions are from utilities. The largest, and fastest growing such emissions are from transportation. Other sources (forests; agriculture) are unattended. A separate, cross-cutting function begs to be performed.

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[9] For example, for much of 2016 OGWC's staff support was seconded to ODEQ to assist in producing a "carbon market mechanism" report required of ODEQ by the Legislature. The task was aligned with the work of the OGWC, but necessarily required deferral of elements of the OGWC's own chosen agenda.

[10]The OGWC web site was designed and constructed with private foundation funding solicited by the Commission. It has no funds to maintain even site security, and still less to use the site to actively engage Oregonians in State climate policymaking or planning, or provide access to means for Oregonians to reduce their carbon footprint or prepare for the effects of climate change.

- The Legislature and Governor need systematic, carefully evaluated reporting from State agencies and the Commission on where progress is being made (and why), and where it is not (and needs attention from policymakers). They need to be provided this information in context, so they can distinguish between the immediate and the important, understand what their policy choices, and be informed of the associated costs and consequences as they consider different strategies.
- The Oregon Global Warming Commission needs at least the modest level of budget and staff support that would enable it to discharge the very broad range of responsibilities it has been assigned by the Oregon Legislature.

OGWC Deliverables and Contributions to State and Community Climate Efforts 2008-2017

1. Since 2008, provided the Legislature and Governor with four Biennial Reports, as required by law, that have tracked progress toward State GHG emissions reduction goals, have highlighted specific agency and community work in service to the goals, and have identified challenges and failures. The 2011 Report included the "Roadmap to 2020" strategy for meeting Oregon's 2020 GHG reduction goal, subsequently offered for review in community meetings around the state.
2. Participated with State agency heads and staff in development of Oregon Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2010), the State's only existing adaptation strategy document.
3. Participated and contributed as a stakeholder in ODOT processes leading to:
    - Development of GreenSTEP, an ODOT analytic model for identifying GHG-reduction transportation and land use choices;
    - Sustainable Transportation Strategy (STS_20XX);
    - Integration of GHG criteria within MOSAIC/Least Cost Transportation Planning tool development (20XX);
    - Developing GHG criteria for STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program) allocation of ODOT discretionary funding.
4. Participated and contributed as a stakeholder in ODEQ processes leading to:
    - Developing timely GHG emissions inventory data, especially for utilities and transportation, improving lag time from four years to six months.
    - Development of consumption-based GHG inventory, offering a different perspective on GHG's for which Oregonians are responsible.
    - Development of a "market mechanism" (e.g., carbon cap or tax) as an option for Oregon's management of GHG's.

5. Participated and contributed as a stakeholder in DLCD process leading to adoption of GHG targets for Oregon communities (Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPPO's); reviewing progress and revising goals in 2017.
6. Participated and contributed as a stakeholder in Oregon Health process leading to its Climate and Health Resilience Plan (2016).
7. Provided the 2016 Legislature with GHG reduction analysis of SB 1547, legislation to eliminate coal-generated electricity from serving Oregon loads and ramping up the State's Renewable Portfolio Standard to a 50% level by 2040.
8. Initiated a Forest Carbon Accounting project in 2016 to develop data and a basis for integrating carbon storage and release outcomes in forests with different State policies on forest health, harvest, forest biomass-to-energy choices, and other forest management practices.

The Commission and individual Members have also participated in and contributed to community-based climate and GHG reduction activities, including the Portland/Multnomah County Climate Action Plan, Metro's Climate Smart Strategy, and the City of Eugene Climate Action Plan.