

**Hair on Fire Oregon Testimony for April 10th, 2017 Hearing
In support of “Climate Test” bill - HB 3343**

Chair Helm and members of the House Energy and Environment Committee,

We are writing in strong support of HB 3343 with -1 amendments on behalf of a group called Hair on Fire Oregon who has been working non-stop since 2015 to advance state climate policies that will enable Oregon to meet our greenhouse gas emission reduction goals set by the legislature in 2007. Reports given to your committee by the Oregon Global Warming Commission and the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute in January 2017, point out clearly that these voluntary aspirational goals are not being met and the consequences to this state in mitigating climate change impacts will be high.

HB 3343 is exactly the common sense policy that Oregon needs. Rather than site large infrastructure with no regard to their climate impacts, HB 3343 creates a “climate test” by which we can weigh economic benefits alongside whether the full life cycle impacts of such projects will allow us to meet our Paris Agreement of keeping below 2 degree C and Oregon’s own GHG reduction goals. The climate test bill would be applied to larger scale infrastructure projects to ensure we are assessing full economic impacts and weighing benefits against downside economic consequences of climate impacts.

Here in rural Southern Oregon, we are feeling concrete effects of our changing climate. Weather patterns have become increasingly erratic with longer, drier summers, snow packs either diminished or melting ahead of traditional spring runoff are causing decreased soil moisture in our now longer and hotter summers. We are avid gardeners and manage nearly 500 acres of timber ground and are experiencing first hand drought-stressed die off, increased bug kill and fire risk. A spring belonging to one of our neighbors up on the Greensprings where we live, for the first time in 60 years of their living here, ceased to flow in 2015, causing them to have to haul in drinking water to their property. The city of Ashland ran a 12” water tie-in to Medford water in 2014 following having 2/3 snowpack level on May 1 (40” of 60”) needed to supply city water through the summer. This was followed by zero snowpack on May 1st, 2015—all of which creates widespread and grave consequences for municipalities, timber, agriculture, fisheries, recreation and more here in our part of the state. In short, we are feeling the effects of climate instability that scientists and our own Oregon Climate Change Research Institute have predicted will increase.¹

By providing a “test” that includes climate impacts, we can look at and weigh benefits against some of the projected income and job loss to important revenue sectors of Oregon that are vulnerable to climate change. According to this report produced by The Climate Trust for the legislature in 2014, [*An Evaluation of Potential Carbon Pricing Mechanisms for the State of Oregon Policy Paper for the 2014 Oregon Legislature*](#), the following chart, found on page 2, depicts the potential harm to various economic sectors in Oregon **if no** action is taken to stem greenhouse gas emissions. As stated earlier, we can attest here in Southern Oregon, we are already experiencing “warmer, drier summers”, “increased wildfires”, “increased irrigation needs” and “disease and pest increases”.

¹ Oregon Climate Change Research Institutes Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (2017).
<http://www.occri.net/publications-and-reports/third-oregon-climate-assessment-report-2017/>

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 ⁵ Tourism: \$9.2B ⁷
Increased ocean acidity	Algae blooms Biodiversity changes	Salmon fisheries: \$6.7M ⁸

These impacts will be significant and costly--putting at risk more than \$47 billion/year of Oregon revenue. The report goes on to say that “...continued worldwide inaction, could cost anywhere from 5-20% of global GDP each year in perpetuity, while action would cost only 1%.” HB 3343 would provide a way for Oregon to weigh the harm and the benefits of each project and sanction those projects that move us in a net positive direction. This makes sense to do, especially in light of the social cost of carbon and other data, like wildfire intensity and costs, drought impacts, etc. now available.

In 2007, Oregon passed HB 3543 setting goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the state to 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 (50.4 million metric tons/year) and at least 75% below 1990 levels by 2050 (14 MMtons/y). The recent report the Oregon Global Warming Commission² submitted to the legislature confirmed that we are nowhere near reaching either of those targets with the voluntary approach Oregon has relied on. In fact, the Department of Environmental Quality continues to issue new permits to pollute for the asking having no directive from the state statutes specifically telling them not to. This, in part, has resulted in an uptick from 60.3 MMtons/year in 2014 to 63.4 MMtons in 2015.³

Table 1: Oregon Emissions by Sector, 1990-2015 (Million MT CO2e)

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Transportation	21.0	22.6	24.4	24.7	23.2	22.3	22.3	21.3	21.4	23.2
Residential & Commercial	16.6	19.9	23.1	22.0	23.3	22.5	20.8	22.0	21.4	22.2
Industrial	13.9	16.9	18.0	13.7	12.3	12.2	11.5	11.9	12.4	12.8
Agriculture	4.9	5.5	5.3	5.7	5.2	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.2
Total	56.4	64.9	70.7	66.2	63.9	62.4	60.2	60.3	60.3	63.4

At the historic Paris COP21 gathering in December 2015, over 170 countries from around the globe, including the United States, signed the Paris Agreement vowing to keep global temperatures well under 2 degree Celsius and if at all possible under 1.5 degrees C above preindustrial levels. Our own Governor Kate Brown in May of 2015 joined California and now 167 jurisdictions from 33 countries on 6

² Oregon Global Warming Commission's fifth Biennial Report to the Oregon Legislature 2017. http://www.keeporegoncool.org/sites/default/files/ogwc-standard-documents/OGWC%202017%20Biennial%20Report%20to%20the%20Legislature_final.pdf

³ Ibid

continents representing 35% of the global economy--each vowing to reach 2 tons of greenhouse gas emissions per capita (~8 million metric tons for Oregon) by 2050 in order to reverse global warming and the extreme harm it is starting to have. **The Climate Test bill is a critical policy needed for us to succeed in reaching these significant GHG reduction targets.**

Another compelling reason for Oregon to pass HB 3343 is that it would accentuate an asset that Oregon has an abundance of, namely renewable energy, while helping avoid the risk of stranded infrastructure assets that are increasingly likely as we move toward lowering GHG emissions on a worldwide scale. Oregon is rich with renewable energy natural resources. We have abundant sun, wind, geothermal, hydro and waves. By scrutinizing projects based on their compatibility with the Paris Agreement, as HB3343 does, we would minimize stranded asset risk and capitalize on developing assets that embrace a renewable energy future. Additionally, this would send a powerful and unequivocal signal to businesses everywhere that "Oregon is open for clean energy business!" triggering both clean energy businesses and jobs to grow in Oregon.

We are well aware of the challenges that Oregon is facing. One that should not be overlooked is the cost of climate change to Oregonians and to the resources that provide a living to many who live in this amazing state. Costs associated with sea level rise the entire length of the coast, ocean acidification, timber, agriculture, fisheries, outdoor recreational and health impacts, if we continue business as usual, will quickly spiral out of control. More than 70% of Oregonians agree that global warming is real and it is time for legislators to acknowledge this extreme threat we face and act with all speed to implement policies including HB 3343 to create a metric to measure full impacts and approve net beneficial projects accordingly.

We ask that you heed the growing signs and act with bi-partisan support to pass HB3343 this legislative session. **Please protect what we all love.** HB 3343 helps rural Oregon, it helps all of Oregon.

Thank you,

Deb Evans and Ron Schaaf
Co-founders, Hair on Fire Oregon
Ashland