

Wenzl: Act on science - pass Clean Energy Jobs

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'As a teacher, as a mom and as a Forest Grove city councilor, I care about ensuring ... Oregon moves forward.'

Science is under attack. It's a strange time when facts we don't like are dismissed as partisan opinions to be thrown aside. As the eighth grade's leadership advisor at Neil Armstrong Middle School, I teach my students critical thinking skills that will carry them into adulthood. My mother is a teacher; I learned from her what a privilege it is to teach kids things that open their minds, not to dismiss scientific findings we don't like as "fake news" just because we wish the results were different.

And believe me, sometimes I do wish the results were different. I wish that 97 percent of scientists hadn't reached consensus on the fact that our planet is warming. But that's a fact, and it's time we act on this reality to mitigate climate change.

Last spring, many attended the March for Science to champion robust and public science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity. This wasn't a march against the president, but it was a march to stand strong to prevent scientific facts from being undercut by his administration.

Thankfully, Oregon is on a path driven by science. Our local and state leaders have acknowledged the importance of acting on climate, from passing the Clean Fuels Standard to enacting a law that transitions our state's power grid off of polluting coal. Now, we not only have an opportunity to lead, but an obligation to do so. Rollbacks at the federal level require us to stand strong, and passing the Clean Energy Jobs bill is the next thing we can do to move Oregon forward.

Clean Energy Jobs would put a price and cap on pollution — pollution that science tells us is having a detrimental impact on our climate, communities, and air and water. The bill takes funds obtained through pricing pollution and reinvests them toward helping Oregon transition to a clean energy economy, one where students like mine can find jobs right here at home in solar, wind, geothermal and more.

We've already seen what clean energy projects can do for our local community. Currently, more than 52,000 Oregonians already work in the green economy producing \$7 billion in goods and services. Two local examples are Thunderbolt Racing in Cornelius where fruit juice waste is converted into ethanol, and Blooming Nursery where the state's largest solar thermal project heats a 54,000-square-foot greenhouse. Clean Energy Jobs will create opportunities for Oregon workers with new jobs and job training, and create an estimated 357 clean energy jobs in our community. Just imagine what major new investment could do for Washington County!

As a teacher, as a mom and as a Forest Grove city councilor, I care about ensuring that Oregon moves forward. We owe it to future generations, and to ourselves, to leave a strong legacy of fact-based action that makes the world a better place. I try to do my small part every day by helping our kids to thrive and know that their contributions to our society are needed and valued. Through my work on City Council, I try to elevate the concerns of our community and create policies that will help our local families succeed. And together, our state can do its part to help Oregon transition to a clean energy economy, to improve the health of our communities, and to lead the nation in acting on climate change by passing Clean Energy Jobs.

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