

My wife and I have always been politically interested but never politically active until our grandchildren were born. We realized then that climate change is the biggest issue facing their future. Over the last three sessions we have immersed ourselves in learning about the issue and watched with horror as climate related disasters occurred in Oregon and around the world. The build up of carbon pollution is slow but steady, an impending slow-moving train wreck and the wheels are leaving the tracks.

We've also followed the issue the last three sessions. We've been to multiple hearings (testifying twice). We've read the 2017 reports from the Oregon Global Warming Commission and the DEQ study on setting up a carbon pricing system in Oregon (and even attended a half day presentation in Portland on the technical aspects of the study). We attended multiple interim work sessions this fall while the latest version of the Clean Energy Jobs Bills was prepared, and have read both of the bills.

One thing we've learned is that this is not just a future problem facing our grandchildren. It is a current problem affecting us now which will only get worse without aggressive action. A carbon pricing system has a societal price, but the price of inaction is far higher in the long run. The House version of the Clean Energy Jobs Bill (HB 4001) is now before your committee. We **STRONGLY** encourage you to support the bill and move it on to the House floor.

Last month I wrote the initial draft of a piece published by the Salem Weekly editorial board. (I am not a member of the editorial board, but responded to a request from a member to prepare a draft.) It is written as an open letter to Senators Courtney and Winters, but I hope it also resonates with you. Please take a moment to review this letter published on February 2.

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Dear Senate President Courtney and Senate Minority Leader Winters:  
Salem residents **should take pride in the fact that our state's two state Senate leaders also represent** us and have done so very ably for so many years. You have both distinguished yourselves by collaboratively serving the people of Salem and working together to advance the long-term interests of the state on innumerable occasions.

We call upon you to once again do the same during the 2018 legislative session by supporting a Clean Energy Jobs Bill.

As you know, environmental pollution issues have often taken a back seat to other concerns which may seem more immediately pressing. A proposal to cap carbon emissions and make large carbon polluters pay a price for their pollution has been advanced during the last several legislative sessions only to be sidetracked by other immediate priorities that required your attention. There will certainly **be more issues demanding your immediate attention this session, as with all sessions. But, it's kind of like ignoring your doctor's advice on an advancing medical condition** because you simply feel too busy with other life issues — **at some point neglect can become dangerous. We've reached this point with carbon pollution.**

Scientists have been telling us for years that human-caused carbon pollution adds a heat-trapping blanket to our atmosphere. Some carbon in the atmosphere is natural. Scientists say that we averaged about 280 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the pre-industrial human past, and that 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide is the highest level in which we can safely thrive over the long

run. **We've ignored their advice. We passed the global 350 threshold around 1990. We're now over 400.**

**And what "symptoms" have we experienced as the carbon level gradually increased?** Higher average global temperatures with more extremely hot days and fewer cold days. More and longer drought. More widespread wildfires. More catastrophic storms and flooding. Too often, we comment that the weather is behaving strangely. It is.

**It's time to listen to the climate scientists and to act. The time for procrastination on the issue of climate change is long past. That's where you two come in.**

The Legislature has taken steps over the last few sessions to prepare us for this day. In 2016 it directed the state DEQ to prepare a comprehensive study laying out how a state carbon fee and **investment plan would reduce Oregon's carbon pollution while raising money to help our transition to a greener economy.** Legislative committees held hearings during the 2017 session so that it could receive input from experts, citizens, and stakeholders, holding over a dozen work sessions in the last few months to finalize a plan. The hard work preparing for major legislation is done.

**Now it's time for you two to lead the legislature in enacting a Clean Energy Jobs Bill.** You have both demonstrated far-sighted leadership in the legislature. A Clean Energy Jobs Bill deserves to be part **of your legacy. Please don't be distracted by other issues. Don't listen to those who will say the issue hasn't been properly worked up and considered. It has. It's time to lead. Pass a Clean Energy Jobs Bill now.**

*Salem Weekly Editorial Board*