



January 13, 2020

Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Regarding: LC 19

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on LC 19. We appreciate the work members of the legislature have done throughout the past many years to develop a thoughtful proposal to take meaningful action to address the climate crisis. We know countless hours have been spent in conversation with many stakeholders, researching policy options, and holding hearings. There has been tremendous work that brings us here today, including bipartisan Clean Energy Working Groups in 2017, the advent of the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction in 2018, and twenty-one hearings and work sessions held in 2019.

In the five years the legislature has debated this proposal, Oregon has been harmed by climate impacts, including but not limited to:

- Increasing ocean acidification, which harms shellfisheries and other marine species,
- Drought that impacts agriculture and reduces hydropower generation,
- Algal blooms that shutdown Salem's drinking water,
- Warm river temperatures that have killed half a million fish at a time,
- Hot temperatures and drought that have stressed Douglas firs and is leading to tree mortality, which could cost the state half billion in economic losses, and
- Smoke filled skies from intensified wildfires that harms outdoor workers, the sick and elderly, and reduces tourism income.

Each has an impact on communities, on the state budget, and on the well-being of Oregonians. These impacts will only intensify if we continue business-as-usual practices or avoid taking bold action.

Cap-and-invest can be the right solution for Oregon. This policy will help reduce pollution, invest in good-paying jobs and improve our communities, and protect our health by cleaning up the air. This program can set Oregon on a new, more sustainable trajectory: one in which clean energy, efficiency, and innovation become new engines of economic development, cut greenhouse gases, and help the state do its share to avert the worst impacts of climate change. Eleven other states, including California, Maine, Vermont and New York, have adopted similar programs and have seen their economies grow while emissions drop. They have fared better

through economic downturns, created good-paying jobs, attracted outside investment, and made air quality improvements.

Bold climate action remains unfinished business ahead of the 2020 legislature.

Unfortunately LC 19 represents an overcorrection that will result in a continuation of business-as-usual for certain sectors and stifle the very innovation needed to drive economic development. Real changes are needed to this proposal to represent bold climate action that Oregon needs to take and enable the program to meet its full potential.

Improvements needed to make this bill real climate action include:

- **Improvements to the transportation portion of the bill** so all oil companies pay their fair share, no matter where their product is sold. Oil companies are the largest source of pollution in our state and they should not be let off the hook. A ton of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere has the same negative impact on maintaining a stable climate no matter what part of the state it was emitted from.
- **Changes to avoid paying polluters to continue business as usual.** We can't afford business as usual - just ask our ski resorts, our shellfish growers and our friends in Southern Oregon coping with months of wildfire smoke. We want to avoid legislation moving forward that is climate action in name only, while it fails to hold many large polluters accountable and curb their pollution. We need to ensure the program incentivizes Oregon's largest users of fracked gas to reduce their fossil fuel use, rather than maintain or increase it.
- **A guarantee of investments in communities hardest hit by the climate crisis.** All along, we've fought for investments in communities who need it most because the climate crisis hits them hardest -- these include rural communities, low-income Oregonians, Tribes, and communities of color. While there are aspirations to prioritize those communities in the current version, Oregonians deserve a guarantee that they will see meaningful investment to help them transition to a cleaner economy.

As you know, global warming is an emergency. This issue is too important for us to throw up our hands or delay action further while our forests burn, our shellfish die, and water runs out in parts of our state.

Thank you for your hard work. We look forward to continuing to work in good faith to make 2020 the year we complete this unfinished business.

Sincerely,

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