



ROCPAC

January 22, 2020

Senate Interim Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Olsen and Members of the Senate Interim Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

I hope you are well. I am writing regarding Senate Bill 1530 on behalf of Rural Oregon Climate Political Action Committee (ROCPAC), an organization composed of rural Oregonians, who are calling on our elected officials to pass meaningful climate legislation, in accordance with the best science available. The Mission of ROCPAC is to provide a voice for rural Oregonians in efforts to establish meaningful programs to reduce climate change and respond to its impacts at the state and local levels through the passing of legislation or other means, electing candidates who recognize climate change as an existential threat, and supporting other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere through the political process.

I greatly appreciate this opportunity to offer comments and suggestions on SB1530. Those of us in rural Oregon are on the frontlines of the climate chaos already impacting our farms, forests, coastlines, and communities. From reduced snowpacks in the winters, to shortened growing seasons, to smoky summer skies, we understand what cheap energy, based on fossil fuels has done to our environment. We also understand that moving away from fossil fuels will result in some additional costs, but that it is necessary to successfully confront the existential threat posed by climate change.

Senate Bill 1530 provides a good framework for climate action, and puts a specific focus on greenhouse gas emissions, and not just carbon, but it isn't strong enough. The current bill is too weak to meet the state's goals for reducing greenhouse gases and provides too many giveaways to the fossil fuel industry allowing these corporations to continue polluting, as usual, increasing greenhouse gas concentrations and threatening our children's future. Given that we need to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 to avoid the worst parts of climate chaos, this bill doesn't go far enough. If Oregon is to lead by example, our goal should be net zero emissions by 2050. ROCPAC suggests amending stated targets as follows: from (b) To at least 80 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2050, to (b) To net zero by 2050.

Senate Bill 1530 fails to guarantee the investments in rural and impacted communities, that were in previous forms of the bill, and are necessary to have a just, effective transition away

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from fossil fuels to a sustainable energy economy. It is imperative that funds from the program are invested in programs that redress the social injustice imposed on many historically disadvantaged communities across Oregon, including, but not limited to rural and coastal communities, communities of color, non-English speaking communities, and migrant workers. These are the communities that are already suffering as a result of climate change and are likely to suffer disproportionately as a result of programs designed to address emissions.

Senate Bill 1530 provides too many allowances that will fail to raise funds needed to invest in rural and impacted communities and promote carbon sequestration in our natural and working lands. The allowances provided will reduce the costs of polluting to the point where companies are no longer incentivized to limit their emissions. In this bill, the natural gas industry has gained entirely too many exceptions allowing the ongoing use of a fossil fuel whose fugitive emissions make it a more dangerous polluter than coal. This bill encourages EITE to switch to natural gas, effectively negating progress made through the reduction of other greenhouse gas emissions. Allowing the natural gas companies to be exempt from emissions regulations is simply not acceptable.

Senate Bill 1530 puts into jeopardy Oregon's ability to join with other carbon markets by exempting some communities from the same transportation fuel regulations enacted on the rest of the state. It is only through economy wide measures that we can ensure our ability to trade with California and other states in a well-regulated carbon market. Oregon is too small to have an effective, stand alone carbon market.

Rural Oregonians see the devastating effects of climate change firsthand when our crops wither from years of drought, our skies fill with smoke from catastrophic wildfires, and our children ask us if they will survive climate change. We are already struggling to adapt to this "new normal", and we need your help. Oregon's rural communities need strong leadership from you, this year, to ensure that their way of life does not become a thing of the past, and that their children can inherit an environment they can thrive in. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 1530. We at ROCPAC look forward to working with you to make these important changes in the bill, and make 2020 the year of climate action in Oregon.

Sincerely,



Hogan M. Sherrow, Ph.D.

Director

Rural Oregon Climate Political Action Committee (ROCPAC)

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