

PCUN, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste testimony to the Joint Committee of Carbon.

2/8/19

PCUN is Oregon's farmworker union and Oregon's largest Latinx organization. On behalf of PCUN's 6500 members, we express our support for the Clean Energy Jobs Bill. Farmworker's and their families are the backbone of the 8 billion agricultural and reforestation industries in Oregon.

Farmworker who toil the land to put food on the American table do backbreaking work while working with carbon and toxic chemicals

It's no coincident the life expediency is 49 years of age compared to 78 years of age for the general population. Farmworker's experience 25% more cancer rate and mis carriages among farmworkers in the county is 50% higher.

According to the GAO, the investigative arm of the US congress, states that over 300,000 farmworker are poison by pesticides. In this debate of reducing carbon, we are in the frontlines. In a perfect world, we support measures such Zero Carbon as in the Big Green deal.

I am here to express PCUN's support of the Cap and Trade approach to start the process of reducing carbon. We also believe that this bill we create jobs and also proceeds raised will benefit impacted communities such as farmworker.

As this debate is happening, Farmworker's are already benefitting. I had the honor to participate in the agriculture work group and I sat with Marty Meyers, CEO of Third Mile Canyon, the largest dairy in Oregon with fifty thousand head of cattle. I asked him what his position was on the Clean Energy Bill. He told me that is company were participating voluntarily in buying offsets from California and Three Mile Canyon is supporting this bill because he rather spend their in a Cap and Trade monies buying offsets from Oregon and by the Ramon, we could use the proceeds to build more housing for farmworkers in the Boardman and Hermiston area.

The bill in it's current form is far from perfect and PCUN has a list of concerns, too many to outline here. I have included those concerns in my written testimony. But I do want to flag that we were very upset that the percentage portion that was SB 1507 is not in the current bill. We believe that without those guarantees, we will have a hard time supporting this bill. Again I want to reiterate that PCUN is continue to the very to make this better, including working so that dedicated revenues raised go to impacted communities.

Clean energy jobs are good for Woodburn

Proposed Clean Energy Jobs bill would benefit farmworkers and families in the area

By: Ramon Ramirez, for *The Woodburn Independent*

It's no secret that climate pollution presents a major problem for our community. The economy and health of farmworkers are tied to the land, and we're already seeing how climate change makes our jobs more difficult. From decreased crop yields impacting profits, to hotter, drier summers that create strenuous working conditions, those who work the land are put increasingly at risk.

Farmworker communities are particularly vulnerable to climate pollution; we're more directly exposed to the damaging, cancer-causing chemicals emitted by gas and diesel.

The life expectancy rate of a farmworker is 49 years of age compared to 78 for the general population.

Low-income communities and communities of color are also hit first and worst by climate change.

Today, 80 percent of Latinos in the United States live in areas where the air quality doesn't meet federal standards.

And in Woodburn, we are no different. Latinos make up 57 percent of the city's 25,000 residents. This needs to change.

To big oil and industry, polluting our air for free is business as usual. In 2018, the Oregon legislature has the opportunity to pass the Clean Energy Jobs bill, a law that will cap and price pollution from Oregon's largest emitters.

The proceeds created as a result will fund training opportunities for workers to join Oregon's already thriving clean energy sector. The cap will create the need for more workers, as companies large and small, and residents across all income levels, seek out clean energy and energy efficient upgrades.

Clean Energy Jobs will fund worker training to help transfer the skills many people already have into new and growing industries.

Imagine this scenario: a fund that could help a local family install solar panels at home to cut down on their electric bill, and the company doing the installing also holds a training program for local men and women looking for a good paying career.

Clean Energy Jobs could make this scenario a reality in Woodburn and other farmworker communities. In Marion County, there is a great need for housing farmworkers. This fund can be used to fulfill that great need.

A law similar to Clean Energy Jobs has already passed in California. There we see that climate pollution has decreased, the economy has continued to grow, and investments have helped revitalize neighborhoods most gravely impacted by poverty and pollution.

In California, we're seeing things now like electric van pools in migrant farmworker towns where there wasn't even a bus line before; we're seeing 400 opportunities in just one city to work in the solar industry, putting solar panels on affordable apartment buildings near transit; we're looking at thousands of trees going into urban communities affected by traffic congestion to help clean the air there and create good green space.

And in some places, we're helping communities do really innovative things like transform a one-third-acre lot of unused public land into a green space with fruit trees that is creating healthy foods for the community, job training around community gardening, and things like that.

Also farmers benefit because they can also apply to get funding for buying updated farm machinery that produces less carbon.

Clean Energy Jobs can help Oregon see these same successes. Oregon needs to step up and do its part.

Ramon Ramirez is president of Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United/Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, better know as PCUN, Oregon's farmworker union based in Woodburn.