



**TESTIMONY**  
**JOINT COMMITTEE ON CARBON REDUCTION**  
**February 24, 2019**  
**Grant County Farm Bureau Opposes HB 2020**

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*Senator Michael Dembrow*  
*Representative Karin Power*

**Summary:**

- 1) Grant County Farm Bureau is opposed to HB2020 as written;**
- 2) additional analysis specific to rural landscapes and their disadvantaged communities is required;**
- 3) agricultural activities should be exempted from carbon reduction implementation measures until additional analysis is completed; and**
- 4) a Rural Landscapes Subcommittee should be created within the Joint Committee on Climate Action.**

Grant County Farm Bureau is writing to you today in opposition to HB 2020 as drafted. We are an independent non-profit organization associated with the Oregon Farm Bureau and represent hundreds of farmers, ranchers, and other landowners in Grant County.

The landowners and producers in Grant County have largely shouldered the burden of natural resource conservation and restoration for many decades. Working with our local partners, our private and public landscapes are some of the most productive fish and wildlife habitats, open lands, soils and range, and human-healthy areas in Oregon. While most Oregon urban areas continue to sacrifice their habitats for the sake of growth and development, we have maintained and improved ours at significant socio-cultural and economic capital cost to ourselves and our future generations. All while producing some of the safest, most reliable, and lowest cost food in the world.

Quite simply, while everyone else has been philosophizing about sequestering carbon and reducing their carbon footprint, we have been quietly studying, designing, and applying adaptive management techniques with our agency and university partners to implement what everyone else is merely theorizing.

HB2020 effectively rolls back this substantial progress in on-the-land conservation measures, making them cost prohibitive and de-incentivizing adaptation, innovation and creativity. Furthermore, implementation of HB2020 as proposed seriously risks destabilizing our current land tenure and production operations, which are already threatened by an aging population, lack of producer recruitment and competition from outside, monied interests.

This is not Oregon's first foray into replacing ongoing, excellent enterprise with a new program to extract wealth from the current stewards in order to redistribute it to State agencies, grant recipients and others in the form of lesser effective, theoretical approaches. What is currently wrong with Oregon's rural economy and our communities is not repaired with this bill but will be intensified.

We recommend specifically that until there is a complete understanding of the **net** contribution to the carbon pool from Oregon's rural areas, the indirect and cumulative effects on primary resource production (i.e. food and fiber) and producers from the proposed carbon reduction measures, and development of actions where rural producers not only benefit economically from the high-quality ecosystem services we already provide but also from increasing our role in carbon reduction efforts **that agricultural-related activities be excluded from HB 2020 implementation.** Furthermore, within the proposed Joint Committee on Climate Action, there **should be created a Rural Landscapes Subcommittee** charged specifically with considering the effects of actions recommended by the Joint Committee, legislation and regulations on what is the greater part of Oregon—the rural landscape.

In fact, our recommendations are much less than what is required of agencies when they propose projects or programs having the potential to impact listed species or sensitive habitats. Why wouldn't we also adopt similar standards for understanding the potential impacts upon our disadvantaged rural communities? Continued pontificating about Oregon's urban-rural divide is one thing, taking reasonable and responsible measures to close that gap is quite another.

Urban Oregon has always viewed rural Oregon as a place where it is able to exploit cheap labor, responsible stewardship, and natural resources for its own benefit. Once again, Oregon's population centers intend to force ruralites to pay a disproportionate share of carbon reduction so that the lives of urban dwellers are largely uninterrupted. That is shameful and inexcusable. We call on you to ensure balance and protect our interests where we simply do not have the votes, wealth or power.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue. We have included reference materials below for your consideration. For more information, please contact Shaun W Robertson, County President (GrantFarmBureau@gmail.com) or Jonathan Sandau with the Oregon Farm Bureau (sandau@oregonfb.org).

Rangeland Sequestration Potential Assessment, Final Report

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/FinalReport.pdf>

Pacific Northwest Rangeland Carbon Sequestration, MS Thesis, Oregon State University

<https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/downloads/vx021h963>

Climate Change and Rural Communities in the US, Draft Briefing Paper

[http://www.rupri.org/Forms/Climate\\_Change\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.rupri.org/Forms/Climate_Change_Brief.pdf)