

To The Honorable Members of The Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction:

I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am honored to be a part of the legislative process and to be involved in shaping Oregon's future.

I am sure there are others who can expound on the environmental and financial impacts of this legislation, so I will take a different tact.

Since I first passed by the Ash Grove Cement plant south of Durkee, Oregon, at the age or roughly 7 years old, it has been my dream to work at the plant. The giant American flag and the lights drew me like a moth to a flame. At the age of 38, I finally had the opportunity to become a member of the Ash Grove family. To have been able to work in an organization that values it's employees, their communities, and the environment has been a pleasure.

Ash Grove has been at the leading edge of environmentally responsible manufacturing. Facing pressure to reduce it's Mercury emissions, Ash Grove went above and beyond to set the standard for all industries in controlling it's output.

We are now at a crossroads. I believe carbon reduction is a critical aspect in the future of manufacturing in the United States. I also believe it is imperative to maintain a strong manufacturing presence, so as not to become beholden to others for what we require to continue to grow our economy.

As I said previously, others are sure to provide you with economic and environmental data to justify keeping Ash Grove operating in Baker County. I will tell you about something else Ash Grove provides to the local area, in both Oregon and Idaho, beyond economic impact. Ash Grove gives the local population hope: hope of a career instead of a job; hope for a wage that does more than just pay the bills and keep a roof over their heads; hope for a better life and future for their children.

Please keep the hope alive.

Thank you,

Casey E. Blackburn