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Opposition Comments regarding HR2020

Co Chair Dembrow, Co Chair Power and Members of Committee:

With regards to the proposed carbon cap and tax (HB 2020), I have the following comments. Oregon is largely viewed as one of the most environmentally progressive states in the nation. This resolution is seen by many as a progressive step toward stemming global climate change, yet Oregon contributes very little to global CO₂ levels (an estimated .14%). Regardless of intention, HB 2020 will have an infinitesimally small effect on lowering global atmospheric CO₂ levels. It will, however, succeed in visiting large negative effects upon the citizens of Oregon.

HB2020 is not pro-active. It is punitive in nature. Increased taxes on fuel, particularly agricultural fuels, will lead to those costs being passed on to the consumer. Oregon farmers and ranchers will also be at a distinct disadvantage compared to producers in other states. Not only will production costs of agricultural products increase, shipping and transport costs will also rise.

Estimates based on census information indicate 626,028 Oregonians are currently on food assistance (SNAP). That's approximately 1 in 7 people statewide, including young families, single individuals and senior citizens on fixed incomes. Raising fuel and food prices will only increase these numbers. As traveling becomes more expensive, less money will be available for food while food prices will steadily increase.

Perhaps those Oregonians in urban areas can take advantage of public transport to lessen the hardship. This option does little to help those living in Oregon's large rural areas. Walking, riding a bike or taking a bus to work, school or shopping is not an option for them. Additionally, rural areas are often low income areas with people already struggling to make ends meet. HB2020 will magnify these problems while achieving no significant positive environmental impact.

For these, and other reasons, I oppose HB 2020.

Thank you for your time and attention in reviewing my comments,

L. Michelle Smith