

Testimony for Clean Energy Jobs Bill by Paulette Wittwer, Parkdale & Portland OR

I am a 5th generation Oregonian. My great great grandparents and their family arrived in Oregon on rafts floating down the Columbia past The Dalles 176 years ago. I inherited a long history and deep sense of protecting our land & water. For the last 40 years, My husband and I have owned a farm, near Parkdale in Hood River County. We have 50 acres of woodlands and 100 acres of pasture land mostly in hay. There's no doubt that the climate crisis is affecting our farm and will affect it more in the future.

With an undependable snow pack and melting glaciers on Mt Hood, our irrigation water supply is less dependable. Our water district has built infrastructure to conserve more water and it is now costing us 3 x what it did just a few years ago. To save water, two years ago the district felt it necessary to offer a fee not to cultivate. We took half our field out of cultivation.

With hotter weather, especially in the summer our forest is in more fire danger. Recently it was necessary to cut five acres of stressed trees and replant a different species (Larch) because of a beetle infestation.

We also have an acre of blueberries and with the hot summers the harvest has been pushed forward and shortened.

Some farm groups and individuals are critical of a cap and invest policy, worried that it will cost them more in fuel and fertilizer. Perhaps it will cost them an increase in the short term but in the long run we'll all lose more with water costs and shortages, as well as increased wildfires and loss of crops. These are costs they may not be considering.

With a well thought out cap that is steep enough to make a difference, our state can benefit from both the lessening carbon load and the monies that can be applied to alternative energy and jobs. Rural areas, which are already struggling with employment stand to be the hardest hit by climate issues. However, rural areas could also be the ones to benefit the most from a climate investment fund that would help sustain agriculture, prevent forest fires, protect water, etc. The 2020 bill should continue to designate a percentage for impacted communities which are mostly rural, as well as separating out a Just Transition Fund for training and support in alternative jobs. Time is running out. We must act now.

PS: The legislature should also do everything possible to support healthy forests. 15% of all forests in Oregon are small woodlands like ours. For carbon sequestration, woodland owners need policies that encourage them to maintain

larger, older trees. If the state were to pass bills like HB 2152 (now in committee) it would tax standing timber and owners would be pressured to cut or sell.