

Feb. 28, 2019

Dear Co-chairs Dembrow and Power and members of Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction,

My name is Anthony Effinger. I live in Portland, Oregon, and I have two children, 15 and 13, who won't be well served if this planet turns into a hothouse.

If we don't act soon, the climate they inherit won't sustain the kind of life that middle-aged people like me have enjoyed. This is serious business. Not since the Cuban Missile Crisis have human beings ticked the doomsday clock so close to midnight.

The Oregon legislature can do something about this. You have an opportunity to lead our state, and the nation, away from the precipice. Oregon can show the world that we will not be bought off by carbon-dependent companies seeking to protect every last dollar of their profits at the expense of your constituents' health, wealth and happiness.

It's your choice. Oregon can be part of the solution, or it can continue to be part of the problem, along with other laggards, like Alabama and Saudi Arabia. That's the company we keep right now. That's the company we will continue to keep if HB 2020, the Clean Energy Jobs Act, gets watered down by big polluters who claim they can't adapt.

In making your choice, I hope you'll do some due diligence on the bogus claims made by industry lobbyists for the status quo. They've told you that HB 2020 will cost Oregon families \$2,000 a year in higher gas and food prices. They've told you that they won't be able to keep Oregonians on their payrolls if they have to pay for the trash they spew into our air.

Both claims are outright lies. The \$2,000 figure is for the year 2050, at a carbon price that no independent market forecaster thinks is possible. Many jurisdictions, including the state of California, have enacted carbon legislation, and in not a single one is there any evidence that fuel or food prices rose as a result.

You know what causes gas prices to rise? Hurricanes that hit the gulf coast of Texas, where the refineries are. You know what makes hurricanes more frequent and more powerful? Global warming. If you want to keep gas prices low, then take action on climate.

And do you know what costs more than gas at any price? Health care. How many Oregonians are still paying off big emergency room bills because their son or daughter had a terrifying asthma attack during last summer's wildfires? How many of our elderly end up in the emergency room, unable to breathe, when a few days of stagnant summer air turn the Willamette Valley into a 100-mile-long ozone funnel?

The Oregon Health Authority says that doing nothing about the climate will cost Oregonians billions in health care costs every year. In addition to those ER visits, people in places like Salem have to buy bottled water when algae blooms taint their taps. Diesel exhaust alone costs Oregonians \$3.5 billion a year in added health care costs, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. All Oregonians pay those bills.

All of the companies that will be affected by HB 2020 are big enough and smart enough to make the changes that our climate crisis demands. The authors of this bill bent over backward to give big polluters a slow, predictable glide path toward climate responsibility. Smart executives should prefer that to the chaos that will most certainly come with doing nothing.

There are fewer jobs on a dying planet. There are fewer jobs fishing for salmon. There are fewer jobs harvesting oysters. There are fewer hazelnuts to harvest and pack. You can't grow Oregon's prize-winning, cool-climate pinot noir in searing summer heat. No one wants to watch Romeo and Juliet at an outdoor theater that's filled with wildfire smoke.

And when those jobs go, there will be fewer people buying gas and concrete, and there will be less garbage to burn. The industries opposing HB 2020 will die by their own hand.

Getting on board now is the better choice. California has had a carbon-pricing system for 10 years, and the economy there is booming. Companies there are more resilient, and more forward thinking. Oregon should be so lucky, and we can be if the legislature sticks to its guns and passes a law that puts the health and welfare of its citizens above the profits of a few sluggish, maladapted companies that refuse to clean up their acts.

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