

Dear Co-Chair Dembrow, Co-Chair Power, members of the Joint Carbon Reduction Committee,

My name is David Michael Smith and I am a resident of Forest Grove. I have lived in Oregon since 1979. When I returned from serving in Vietnam almost 50 years ago, one of the stories I covered as I began a career in journalism was the growing irrefutable evidence of climate change. After half a century of ignoring those concerns and kicking solutions into the future for others to deal with -- here we are. My 3-year-old granddaughter is about to inherit a world where the effects of climate change are in full evidence, where we have been warned that we have but a short time left to avoid irreversible disaster.

Those opposed to HB 2020 most often cite the costs to industry and consumers if we implement a Cap and Invest program. But what price will we pay -- will my granddaughter pay -- if we fail to act? Unparalleled healthcare costs incurred from the effects of polluted air and heat waves; the economic costs to our farmers and ranchers brought on by devastating droughts and extreme weather events, widespread dislocation as climate refugees seek habitable land, continued losses to our economy as our natural resource and tourism industries are impacted -- the list of consequences is as dire as it is lengthy. Please. The time for debate is over. Oregon can make both a practical and inspirational contribution to mitigating climate change by passing HB 2020. While no one piece of legislation is a panacea, HB 2020 is an ingenious plan that weans us away from fossil fuel, encourages technological innovation, puts money towards the creation of jobs, developing, manufacturing, installing and maintaining those new technologies and a wide range of other jobs that support a clean energy economy. These and other benefits will be felt statewide, rural areas and in poorer communities and communities of color.

It is no longer hyperbole to claim that we are staring into the abyss of an emergency that threatens our survival. Pass HB 2020.