

Honorable Co-chairs Dembrow and Power and members of the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction:

My name is Chris O'Neill, and I am writing today in support of HB 2020. It is time for the Oregon Legislature to act forcefully to reduce greenhouse gasses—actually we are late, though hopefully not too late.

I read news articles and letters to the editor and recognize that some citizens fear the impact of “cap and trade” on their businesses, livelihoods, and families. Yes, there will be some level of economic impact that farmers and ranchers and others want to avoid, and who cannot empathize with the situation they—indeed, *all of us*—are in? However, we are already experiencing negative economic and health impacts in Oregon from hotter forest fires, leaner rainfall, and changes in the Pacific Ocean. Everyone is affected. And the vast and overwhelming majority of climate scientists tell us that these negative impacts will only worsen unless and until we drawdown the amount of greenhouse gases that human activity pumps into the atmosphere. You must act now!

With that goal in mind—drawing down the greenhouse gases that imperil our ecological systems—HB 2020 is a sensible, market-based strategy and should not be weakened by amendments that favor profit-making fossil fuel companies or ignore the 2035 carbon emission reduction threshold of 45%. Furthermore, natural gas companies sell a polluting fossil fuel and should not receive a free pass or other consideration. All the major polluting industries should compete in the “carbon market,” and the licensing revenue collected from the carbon auction should fund projects that promote clean energy job growth. Toward that end, the basic features of HB 2020 are sound and fair. Please move this strong bill forward “do pass” from committee.

Finally, thank you for investing the effort to understand and sort through energy solutions for a more hope-filled future. It is the most important public policy work of our lifetime.

Sincerely yours,

Chris O'Neill

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