

An Open Letter from Scientists and Experts Supporting a Clean Energy Transition in Oregon

March 3, 2019

Dear Governor Brown and Oregon State Legislators,

As Oregon scientists, researchers, and economists, we are deeply concerned that climate change compromises the quality of life of all Oregonians and threatens our state's—and planet's—future. We need your leadership now more than ever to reduce the risks of a dangerously warming climate.

The nation's record-breaking extreme weather events of the last few years provide a sobering reminder of possible future impacts to Oregon if global warming emissions continue to rise. The scope and severity of many of these extreme events will likely worsen. Oregonians are already facing changes in water availability brought on by smaller snowpack and earlier snowmelt diminishing fisheries and agriculture; our forests and related industries are threatened from increasing wildfires, insect outbreaks, and tree diseases; and our coastal communities are impacted by rising sea levels and increasing ocean acidity.¹

While Oregon must adapt to the inevitable impacts of a changing climate, the state must also take meaningful and binding steps to reduce heat-trapping emissions that would cause much more devastating consequences in the decades to come. While Oregon has goals to reduce heat-trapping emissions, the state is not on track to meet them.²

We can no longer delay meaningful action. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report shows that to meet global temperature goals, we must make large-scale cuts to pollution in the next decade.³ This underscores the pressing urgency for action. The emissions choices we make today—in Oregon and throughout the

¹ May C., C. Luce, J. Casola, M. Chang, J. Cuhaciyán, M. Dalton, S. Lowe, G. Morishima, P. Mote, A. Petersen, G. Roesch-McNally, and E. York. 2018. Northwest. In *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II*, edited by D.R. Reidmiller, C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, K.L.M. Lewis, T.K. Maycock, and B.C. Stewart. Washington, DC: U.S. Global Change Research Program. Online at <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/24>, accessed January 24, 2019. doi: 10.7930/NCA4.2018.CH24.

² 2018 Biennial Report to the Legislature for the 2019 Legislative Session, Oregon Global Warming Commission. September 24, 2018. Salem, OR. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c554e0f09ca40655ea6eb0/t/5c2e415d0ebbe8aa6284fdef/1546535266189/2018-OGWC-Biennial-Report.pdf>

³ IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Global warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty* [V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, H. O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J. B. R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M. I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, T. Waterfield (eds.)]. World Meteorological Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 32 pp. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

world—will shape the planet our children and grandchildren inherit. **We, the undersigned scientists and researchers, urge you to pass a strong climate policy in 2019 to cap and price emissions, invest the funds in Oregon communities to support clean energy jobs and climate resilience, and put the state on the path to meeting its emission reduction goals.**

Please help create a cleaner, safer, and healthier future for Oregon. Let this be our legacy.

The signers of this letter are scientists and researchers who live or work in Oregon and hold a PhD, MD, or a Masters in a field of science, economics, public health, or engineering. All signers have expertise relevant to our understanding of climate change, its impacts and costs on people, ecosystems, and society, or solutions for clean energy and climate adaptation. Institutional affiliations are provided for purposes of identification and do not imply endorsement of the letter by those institutions.

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