

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction of the Oregon Legislature

March 8, 2019

Hogan M. Sherrow, Ph.D.

Board Member, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

Climate Leader, Climate Reality Project

Executive Director, WinterSpring

Introduction

- Board Member of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now with 5 years experience with the organization.
- Climate Leader with the Climate Reality Project, trained in 2012.
- Executive Director of WinterSpring, a bereavement organization, facing eco-grief on a daily basis
- Former research scientist, having studied the impacts of climate change on ecologies, humans, and animals for over ten years.
- Father of two.

Support for House Bill 2020

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

My name is Dr. Hogan Sherrow, and I thank you for taking the time to request and consider my testimony regarding HB 2020: The Clean Energy Jobs Bill. I was in attendance at the public hearing, held at Central Medford High School recently, and thank you for holding these open meetings. I was scheduled to testify at the hearing, but had to leave before my name was called to volunteer at our local animal shelter with my daughter. I am writing today to provide my full throated support for HB 2020: The Clean Energy Jobs Bill.

I am active in the climate change research and activism communities, and often deal with individuals grieving over what they perceive to be a dying planet, and overwhelming feelings of helplessness and guilt. I am also an avid outdoorsman, spending as much time as possible enjoying the natural wonders of Oregon, from hiking the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, to rafting and fishing the Rogue River, to hunting the forests of our region, to camping on the coast with my daughters. My parents moved our family to Oregon in 1982. My dad was a farmer and my mom an appointment secretary, and they taught me to embrace, respect, and protect our environment – a tradition I am working to pass on to my daughters, and one of the reasons I am most excited about HB 2020.

By passing the strongest version possible of HB 2020, and addressing the impacts of climate change at the state level, you have an opportunity to show our friends, neighbors, and children how to care for our environment, while providing the vision needed to move Oregon into the 21st century as a leader in a green economy. This legislation is historic in

nature, and by supporting it, you will be positioning yourselves on the right side of history, and demonstrating to all of Oregon the leadership qualities you were elected for. The facts have been compiled, and the results are in; the Clean Energy Jobs Bill will help Oregon address our part in climate change, and join a coalition of western states and British Columbia, who already have similar systems in place. As a result, we will be environmentally healthier, and economically stronger.

One of the most disappointing things I observed during the public meeting was the disinformation that was being spread during multiple testimonies. Contrary to what opponents of this bill claim, climate change science is not “fuzzy”. The world’s scientific experts are in agreement, this is not a debatable issue, anthropogenic climate change is happening. Despite what we heard during the hearing, HB 2020 would not result in an economic crisis, or a massive spike in energy costs. Financial decisions won’t be made in some back room, by unelected special interests.

- According to the IPCC, climate change is accelerating at rates that were not predicted by previous models, and we have less than 12 years to avoid the most catastrophic of its consequences¹.
- The Gross Domestic Product of California (overall and per capita) has risen while greenhouse gas emissions (overall and per capita) have fallen².
- Meanwhile, the cap and trade states of the Eastern Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) were 4.3% ahead of surrounding states on economic growth and 15% better in emissions reductions³.
- When California’s cap and trade law went into effect in 2012, gasoline prices fell⁴.
- In the RGGI, electricity prices have fallen 6% since cap and trade was introduced. Meanwhile, prices have risen 6% in other states, so the net price benefit for the cap and trade policy is -12%³.
- HB2020 demands that all revenues expenditures serve the goals of the Climate Action Program in reducing emissions or capturing and storing greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere. The program and its administration would be supervised by a House and Senate legislative committee making it accountable to our elected representatives, and by extension the citizens of Oregon, not unelected bureaucrats.

I was especially disappointed to hear our Jackson County Commissioners suggest that because Oregon can’t solve the climate crisis on our own, HB 2020 is a bad idea. Of course Oregon cannot solve the climate change crisis on its own, and we are very much not on our own in our efforts. By adopting HB 2020 into law, Oregon will be joining a broader coalition of states and countries that have adopted similar market places to begin to address climate change. Anyone who uses whether or not a global problem can be solved by one region as a benchmark for decision making and policy adoption is delusional and should not be in elected office.

I have greater trust in your ability as a committee to make sure that this bill is as strong as possible. I trust that you will ensure that the resultant law deals with the full cycle of greenhouse gas emissions, and not just carbon. I am confident that you will structure the bill

in such a way to guarantee investments in rural and poor communities, who will need the support to make a full transition to clean energy and the jobs that accompany it. I know that you will stand up for all Oregonians and make sure that any company impacted by the caps on greenhouse gas emissions will not be able to simply pass the costs on to consumers.

We stand at a climate crossroads as a state, a nation, and a planet. Will we take the bold action needed to meet this challenge and ensure a future for our children and grandchildren? Or, will we allow misinformation, fear, and political paralysis to dominate our actions, and our children and grandchildren to an uncertain future where smoke from wildfires is the least of their problems?

You have the opportunity to demonstrate true, visionary leadership by passing the strongest version of HB 2020 possible, and to demonstrate to our state and the nation that we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, while providing the resources needed for an economic revolution in rural Oregon, and across the state. HB 2020 can be the foundation for a revolution where 21st century jobs in clean energy provide an equitable and bright future for the communities who need it most. Thank you for your time and your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hogan M. Sherrow, Ph.D.", written in a cursive style.

Hogan M. Sherrow, Ph.D.

Sources

1. Global Warming of 1.5C. 2018. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report. <http://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>
2. California's Greenhouse Gas reductions and economic progress graph. https://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables/tracking_progress/documents/Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Reductions.pdf
3. Outpacing the Nation: RGGI's environmental and economic success, the Acadia Center, 2017. http://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Acadia-Center_RGGI-Report_Outpacing-the-Nation.pdf
4. California Average Weekly Retail Gasoline Prices 1996-2018. https://www.energy.ca.gov/almanac/transportation_data/gasoline/retail_gasoline_prices2.html

