

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 4, 2019

House Committee on Natural Resources
80th Oregon Legislative Assembly
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: HB 3025 Western Oregon Regional Carbon Sink (WORCS)

Dear Colleagues:

Please accept this letter of support for House Bill 3025 (HB 3025). This measure is intended to promote a strategic “moon shot” approach to combating climate change and its potentially catastrophic impacts upon our place and people. The bill is relatively simple in concept: establish a date certain by which the State of Oregon – as a community – plants at least 1,000,000,000 trees (or vegetative equivalents) to remove as much as 18,000,000 tons of greenhouse gases from our atmosphere. Please note: this figure aligns with what the nation of Australia believes they can remove through a similar program, over a similar timeframe. Oregon may actually be able to remove more gases, given our climate and soils.

This proposal is offered as a supplement to the ongoing policy conversations associated with House Bill 2020 (HB 2020), not as a replacement. We clearly must dramatically reduce our carbon emissions if we have any hope of salvaging an environment capable of sustaining life. But we must do more than reducing future release of carbon – we must find a way to capture the greenhouse gases already impacting our planet. This is where HB 3025 offers us a path: it is a proposal to develop a multidisciplinary (all hands-on deck) approach to identifying the best shrubs, trees, and other vegetation; while working with communities throughout the State of Oregon to place carbon reducing plants – in areas traditionally not recognized as forests or wetlands.

While I believe the science suggests that we can – and should – partner with forest industries on developing a longer harvest cycle yielding both greater economic and environmental value, this bill is not that. This bill is expressly about optimizing areas in each, every kind of soil; it is a bill to encourage a statewide commitment to combating the dangers of climate change through an integrated rural, suburban, and urban forestry/vegetation planting effort that could reinvigorate communities large and small – and if implemented appropriately, create a new marketable value for nations seeking offset values aligned with the Paris Accords. Oregon grows trees naturally. And while we cannot transform high deserts into forests, we may well transform areas within deserts into carbon capturing farms of alternative vegetation.

We have hundreds of thousands of acres in private as well as public ownership that can be optimized: brownfields, roadways, and river banks that can be reclaimed – can be repurposed for carbon reduction. We can plant “Victory Forests” in similar fashion to the Victory Gardens of World War II. Trees are becoming recognized as a major tool in the fight against the negative effects of climate shift. The American Association for the Advancement of Science recently argued that, “Trees are our most powerful weapon in the fight against climate change.” The UN recently began it’s “Trillion Tree Campaign.” This figure is important because a Yale Study found that a decade of CO2 emissions could be effectively “cancelled out” by the planting of 1.2 Trillion trees (globally). I believe Oregon should play to our strengths; we are a natural carbon sink absent this massive investment, with it – we could become a global leader in the race to save our planet.

In conclusion, if you have questions or require additional information, please let me know. I appreciate your attention on this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Evans".