

April 8, 2019

Testimony in support of SB 928: Establishing Oregon Climate Authority

Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Submitted by: Catherine Macdonald, Oregon Climate Policy Director, The Nature Conservancy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 928. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a science-based and non-partisan conservation organization. Our mission is to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends. TNC was incorporated in Oregon in 1961. Today we have over 70,000 supporters statewide with members in every county. Our staff, based in communities across the state, work collaboratively with tribes, government agencies, elected officials, private landowners, businesses, and natural resource stakeholders to develop innovative solutions to the major challenges facing people and nature.

Reducing emissions, increasing carbon sequestration and improving ecosystem and community resilience are priorities for The Nature Conservancy. The 2018 [Fourth National Climate Assessment](#) and [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 1.5 degrees Celsius Report](#) are urgent wake-up calls on the need for ambitious climate action. Limiting global warming to 1.5°C will require "rapid and far-reaching action."

We support SB 928 because Oregon needs comprehensive state leadership on climate change, greenhouse gas mitigation and the transition to low-carbon, clean energy resources. While the Oregon Global Warming Commission has done yeoman's work with very few resources and little to no authority, it is not positioned to lead the scale of climate action needed today. We have the following **recommendations regarding the bill:**

1) Natural and Working Lands should be an important part of Oregon's overall climate strategy. In addition to aggressive action to reduce anthropogenic emissions, Oregon is well positioned to contribute to drawdown by increasing sequestration in natural and working lands. As such, we support language in Section 2 (2) making it an explicit goal of the state of Oregon **to sequester and store greenhouse gas emissions on natural and working lands.**

2) In keeping with the Climate Authority and Board's broader goals, we would like to see a modification to Section 8 (4) (Page 6, lines 12-14). The Board should update the Legislative Assembly on the states progress to meeting all the goals in Section 2.

Section 8 (4) The Oregon Climate Board shall provide a biennial report to the Legislative Assembly
in the manner provided in ORS 192.245 on the progress of the state in meeting the state's climate and clean energy and energy conservation **goals as stated in Section 2.**

3) All state agencies need a mandate to contribute to Oregon's climate goals and to conduct regular assessments and report on their progress toward achieving those goals. We would like to see additional direction in SB 928 to other state agencies to assist the Climate Authority and/or its

Commission carry out their duties, adapted from provisions in [SB 598](#), Section 11(3) as paraphrased below:

Pursuant to ORS 468A.225, all agencies of state government identified by the Climate Authority to have responsibilities related to the duties of the Authority, shall, as requested by the Authority and to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate with the Board to:

- (a) Establish primary responsibilities and tasks for carrying out the recommendations of the Board;
- (b) Develop benchmarks against which the agencies of state government may measure progress toward achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions and adaptation and preparation outcomes that are consistent with the recommendations of the Board; and
- (c) No less than once each year:
 - (A) Evaluate progress against the benchmarks developed under paragraph (b) of this subsection each agency's progress toward achieving outcomes consistent with the recommendations of the Board; and
 - (B) Identify and evaluate adjustments to the benchmarks developed under paragraph (b) of this subsection as necessary.

4) The Climate Authority needs a strong Board with relevant expertise in a range of topics related to climate and energy. The description in Section 5 of prospective board members should be strengthened to make it clearer that the state will seek Board members **with expertise** and not just representation from stakeholder groups who are “well informed in energy and climate issues.” We recommend that prospective board members have expertise in transportation, grid and industrial decarbonization strategies; waste reduction; carbon accounting, carbon markets and natural and working lands sequestration opportunities and public health issues.

5) The Climate Authority needs to be set up for success. We recognize the significant scope of work associated with the tasks that will be in front of the new Climate Authority. We support a strong funding package to ensure that the Authority can adequately staff program development, linkage discussions and rulemaking; and phasing roles and responsibilities in over-time to ensure that the transitions are smooth.

In closing, we support the passage of SB 928 and urge you to vote in support of continuing its development. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

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