

**From:** [Anthony Effinger](#)  
**To:** [SENR Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** Oregon is an Industrial Forest with Good PR  
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Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Senate Interim Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

Ask anyone on the East Coast what they think about when they think about Oregon, and they are likely to mention something about how we care so much about our environment.

Ask an Oregonian if their state is environmentally responsible, and they are likely to say 'hell, yes!'

Both are wrong. I think we're coasting on the legacy of people like Oswald West and Tom McCall. They tackled the biggest environmental problems of their day. West protected the whole coastline from private development. McCall took those protections a step further and tackled litter with the bottle bill.

We would be lucky to have leaders like them to deal with the biggest environmental crisis of our age (and maybe ever): climate change. Instead, we have a legislature that's captured by an ill-informed, un-scientific, whining minority, and a governor who has yet to take matters into her own hands.

The result is that for all its green bluster, Oregon has done precious little to tackle climate change. Environmentalists have been trying for 20 years to get laws that protect this planet, and political leaders have failed them that whole time.

The worst failures are the most recent. Last year, Senate President Peter Courtney stood in at the Senate lectern and said he didn't have the votes to pass the Clean Energy Jobs bill. Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, the senator from Boeing, had chickened out, or so went the autopsy of that shameful day.

Now, we have a new bill, SB 1530. I'm no expert, but to me, this bill seems like a sop to the Republican senators who fled the state last year to stop Clean Energy Jobs. Phasing in the carbon cap county by county, especially on fuel sales, seems like a bureaucratic nightmare. I listened to testimony on this issue and thought: 'no way.' I'd rather drive a herd of feral cats from Pendleton to Portland with a gun to my head than administer that mess.

The new bill also makes us seem less like a state, and more like a loose federation of counties. What if we started treating other laws like this? Guns banned in Multnomah county and not in Harney. School funds distributed based on who pays the most tax.

So, here we are, about to deep-six the legacy of West and McCall because we can't take bold action. I'm resigned to seeing a gutless bill become more gutless in the hands of the lobbyists who ply the halls of the capital, shilling for oil companies from Texas and Oklahoma.

But, at least, let's quit kidding ourselves. Oregon is no longer a leader on the environment. That reputation was tarnished for two decades up to 2018, and smashed in 2019.

Let's accept what we truly are: an industrial forest with good PR. If we were anything else, we would pass a climate bill strong enough to match legislation in California and elsewhere in the nation, giving climate responsibility a bigger footprint. New York has a better climate law. New York! When it comes to climate, we are truly Mississippi, but with crappier weather.

If we were truly leaders, we would care about our oyster beds as they die in acidic waters. We would care about the dwindling snow pack that is punishing the people who make their living from winter recreation. We would protect our forests from drought and fire. We would comfort our children by taking steps to protect them from a global-warmed hell-scape. This term is not hyperbolic. See: Australia.

So, call me discouraged, or call me a realist. I get all sorts of emails from Renew Oregon saying that polluters are prowling these hearings, packing the rooms with people who supposedly will be hurt by a perfectly sane climate bill. Are there oyster farmers among them? Ski patrolmen? Farmers? Firefighters? I doubt it.

Clean Energy Jobs did more than enough to protect timber jobs. Do those folks know that 28,000 journalists have lost their jobs in the last decade. Do they know that those journalists didn't get any money from their state governments for retraining? I was a full-time journalist for 24 years. The chances of me ever getting a full-time gig again are zero. Should Lew Frederick, my senator, run off to Idaho on my behalf?

Oregon is more than Timber Unity. It's more than logging. And the trees are screwed, too. Take a look at the Douglas firs that are dying from heat and drought along I-5. After those are gone, what will the lumbermen cut? Palm trees?

Good luck with that.

Yours sincerely,  
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