

2020 Legislative Session – SB 1530
Testimony provided to the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural
Resources by Jessica Gomez

February 3rd, 2020

To the Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

I would like to thank each of you for your efforts in addressing one of the more challenging issues of our times, climate change. I would also like to acknowledge Senator Dembrow's extensive work on this issue.

As the CEO of a Southern Oregon advanced manufacturing company, I am tasked with making decisions that impact the future financial well-being of my company, my employees, and my family. As an Oregon State Legislator, you are often tasked with making decisions that will impact the future well-being of all Oregonians. As with most financial decisions, you can narrow down the process to a few primary considerations; What is the cost, what is the impact, and in what time-frame can we expect to see the desired results.

According to climate scientists, we must keep the earth's temperature rise below 1.5°C in order to avert disaster. How much does this legislation assist in that effort? I spent considerable time researching and analyzing data looking at our current atmospheric carbon levels and Oregon's current carbon emissions. Considering Oregon's level of carbon emissions, the total carbon reduction expected from this legislation over a thirty-year time span will impact the earth's temperature by less than one one-thousandth of a degree Celsius.

Rather than mitigating climate change, the more likely outcome of this legislation will include one or more of the following:

- Large and politically well-connected companies will find ways to extract grant dollars from the state to subsidize their construction cost under the guise of improved energy efficiency.
- Small and mid-sized Oregon companies will either comply, move out of state, or outsource their manufacturing to a part of the world with less environmental or labor regulations and continue producing CO₂.
- Oregonians will pay higher prices for just about everything.

The discussions around climate change are centered around its impact on people, especially those that are impacted most by climate change, and is often presented as evidence in support of this legislation. But I would like to take a moment to highlight the impact this legislation itself will have on our fellow Oregonians. Energy, transportation, housing, and food prices will all be higher, and jobs directly impacted by this legislation may be lost. In human terms, this means the following: A timber transport driver may lose his job, leaving a family without a main breadwinner. A sixth-grade girl's family may not be able to afford a new pair of shoes for her school dance. A son may not be able to afford to travel to visit his elderly mother. A struggling family falls further behind in their rent. Oregon families falling further behind is the more likely outcome of this legislation rather than reducing the temperature of the earth.

I realize this is a difficult decision considering the political demands and expectations surrounding this topic. We all must ask if the right path is the one that is costly with a negligible outcome, or should we instead focus on solutions that do not increase the financial burden on Oregonian families and have a tangible outcome? Similar to the way the world responded and collaborated toward a solution for ozone depletion, the world must do the same for CO2 emissions. But this will be a much heavier lift, as lives and livelihoods depend on energy. We must provide leadership, innovation and renewable energy technology to rapidly industrializing countries so that have a chance to achieve the same quality of live we enjoy while finding ways to reduce CO2 emission. This will ultimately have a much greater impact than taxing carbon emissions in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my viewpoint.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Gomez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

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