

Dear Chair Dembrow,

I hear a lot of talk about how the focus in Oregon should be on “green” and saving the planet and lowering carbon emissions. All of that sounds good, feels good, and makes for great sound bites, but let’s break that down to the nuts and bolts of daily living in this state.

One aspect of making Oregon “green” that we hear a lot about, is the transition from timber jobs to recreation and tourism jobs. In Douglas County, the living-wage jobs are in the timber industry: mill workers, equipment operators, fallers, road builders, truck drivers. Recreation and tourism jobs are seasonal and not living-wage jobs.

In fact, the culture of people working in the recreation field is one of young, single people that want to travel and rarely stay in one place more than a few years. Managers and planners that have several years of experience and a four-year degree have salaries around \$35,000. Trail crew-members, toilet cleaners and maintenance folks are often retirees that volunteer or are low paid seasonals. Even in private industry, tourism jobs in hotels, restaurants, guide services and gift shops are seasonal and minimum wage jobs. This is not the way to infuse Oregon’s rural economy.

In theory, our company fits perfectly into the ideal “green” Oregon recreation business. Our specialty is recreation trail, small recreation facility and wildlife habitat restoration projects. A typical job for us might be building ADA trails, with a parking lot or trailhead, maintaining existing multi-use forest trails, or constructing new trails. We have performed this type of work since our start in 2007, successfully completing contracts with the Forest Service, BLM, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the City of Eugene.

A typical contract of this nature takes us one to two months to complete and contract prices are in the range of \$30,000 to \$70,000. In the last few years, we have been able to get two of those jobs per year. There are around five of these types of jobs advertised annually between all of the agencies in the state. The remainder of our work is related to ranch improvements (roads and water infrastructure), forest road building and some residential excavation.

We work throughout the state – we spend a lot of time traveling to work. We have been told by State Park employees that we are their favorite contractor and they have used pictures of our work to write specifications for their jobs. There are currently three other contractors in the State of Oregon that we regularly bid against. These contractors have been in business for years, are good at their work and yet there isn’t enough work in this entire state to keep all four of us busy between federal, state and city agencies.

Let me re-state that. In a state the size of Oregon with the amount of public land in this state, there are not enough recreation trail and small facility jobs to keep four contractors busy full time. One of those companies works in Washington, one of the companies does wildland fire suppression, we do other excavation work and the fourth doesn’t seem to have to work full time.

Federal recreation budgets are ridiculously low because there are no timber receipts to fund recreation – some districts can’t afford toilet paper and garbage disposal. Oregon State Parks Budgets are better, but still there is much maintenance and development that doesn’t happen because there isn’t enough money. Our economy depends on timber.

If state leadership is serious about making an impact in Oregon, then why not look at actions that actually make a difference in the state’s carbon footprint? Timber Unity has put forth some

valid options that are worth considering. This state's recycling infrastructure is a joke. Douglas County has no recycling. Why isn't the state looking at improving recycling in Oregon? Perhaps even processing facilities and recycling plants in this state, rather than relying on China. This would reduce carbon emissions from shipping.

Oregon's timber industry has long been on the forefront of innovation. The research and testing of materials for tall wood structures in recent years is an excellent example of trying to use renewable wood instead of non-renewable concrete and steel.

Cap and trade will put barriers in place preventing innovations in existing businesses as well as preventing innovative new business from looking at Oregon for their home.

In 2019, our company spent \$11,973.45 on fuel: 1665.31 gallons of gas, 16634.65 gallons of on-road diesel and 454.31 gallons of off-road diesel. Our natural gas bill for heating our home and water for the year was \$559.64. If the cap and trade bill goes through, we will see an increase in our natural gas bill of \$40. Our fuel bill will increase by \$825/year.

Our equipment and the Ford we use to tow it are all 2015 or newer. They are supposed to be the cleanest, most efficient engines on the market, but we are the exception to the rule in the excavation business. Even the most lucrative excavation businesses have old vehicles and equipment that they keep around for specialized jobs or for when they are swamped with work. Is it really better for the environment to scrap functioning equipment and buy new just to save a few gallons of fuel? What is the carbon foot print of scrapping the old machine and making a new one?

Prices for new equipment, trucks, and vehicles are cost prohibitive. I don't know what the average age of a truck in Oregon is, but most of the ones we see in our area are from the 1990's. Trucks are an excellent example of recycling. A truck that starts out as a log truck, gets sold and remade into a dump truck. When it's close to the end of its life it is refitted to be a water truck which is used less but still functional. Isn't it better to re-use something that exists rather than scrap it and make something entirely new?

In the phrase Reduce, Reuse, Recycle we are told those are listed in order of importance. We should be reducing the number of new things we buy, find re-uses for the things we have and then recycling. The same should hold true for farm tractors, log trucks, excavation equipment and vehicles.

The science says that cap and trade won't actually reduce our carbon footprint. The math says that Oregon's per capita carbon is on a downward trend. Taxes and carbon auctions don't actually improve the environment, so please quit forcing them on the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,
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Sincerely,

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