

Testimony in support of HB 4167/SB 1530 Cap & Invest
2/20/2020

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Janet Lorenzen, Associate Professor of Sociology. I teach at Willamette University and live in Salem. I got involved with climate activism after experiencing hurricane Sandy in New Jersey when I was in graduate school.

Cap and Invest is an economic opportunity. For example, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) on the east coast covers utilities and fuels. Below is an example of the consequences of that program from a 2018 report. I quote it at length:

“Local investment of RGGI dollars on energy efficiency and renewable energy offset the impact on electricity prices resulting from CO2 allowance costs.

On the one hand, the inclusion of the cost of CO2 allowances in wholesale prices tends to increase wholesale electricity prices in the RGGI region at the beginning of the 2015-2017 period. But these near-term impacts are more than offset during these years and beyond, because the states invest a substantial amount of the RGGI auction proceeds on EE [energy efficiency] programs that reduce overall electricity consumption and on RE [renewable energy] projects that reduce the use of higher-priced power plants. Consumers gain because their overall electricity bills go down. Since RGGI’s commencement in 2009, energy and dollar savings resulting from all states’ investments in EE and RE has more than offset the wholesale market price increases associated with inclusion of allowance costs in market bids.

Energy consumers enjoy a net gain of \$220 million as a result of the RGGI program (2015-2017), as their overall energy bills drop over time.

Net benefits accrue to residential, commercial and industrial customers. Consumers of electricity save \$99 million, and consumers of natural gas and heating oil save \$121 million. These amounts are in addition to the economic benefits they receive as members of the local economies of the RGGI states where the allowance auction proceeds are spent.” (RGGI report 2018, page 5).

To read the whole report go to:

https://www.analysisgroup.com/globalassets/uploadedfiles/content/insights/publishing/analysis_group_rggi_report_april_2018.pdf

The data is even more convincing when we look at public opinion and support for cap and invest.

- A recent poll found that 71% of Oregonians support Cap & Invest. (January 2019)
- Pollsters also found that 80 percent of voters in urban areas supported cap & invest, along with 67 percent of rural voters (support cap & invest).

Sometimes the media implies a false equivalency between pro-cap & invest activists and anti-cap & invest activists. But they are not equal. Only 18% of Oregonians are against action on climate change.

- In Clackmas County alone, 71% of Oregonians support regulating CO2 as a pollutant.
- Additionally, a meta-poll (that aggregated several polls together) shows that 76 percent of Oregonians want to see CO2 regulated as a pollutant, including 60 percent of Oregon Republicans (want CO2 regulated as a pollutant).

These are not single polls, these numbers represent multiple polls over several years. And they represent a mandate for action. Climate change, for average Oregonians, is uniting not polarizing.

Companies pay to dispose of trash and chemicals to protect the land and water. Why wouldn't they also pay to dispose of CO2 or methane? It is time to stop treating the atmosphere like an open sewer.

Thank you for your work on cap & invest. You are on the right side of the polling and on the right side of history.

Details on polls:

<https://www.sightline.org/2018/02/06/oregonians-want-solutions-on-climate/>

<https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/?est=happening&type=value&geo=state&id=41>

<https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/pulse/poll/is-oregons-cap-and-trade-bill-the-right-approach-to-climate-change/21494752>

<https://pamplinmedia.com/sl/417977-321215-poll-oregon-voters-inclined-to-support-cap-and-invest->