

Joint Interim Committee on the 2020 Second Special Session

Co-chairs Senator Peter Courtney and Representative Time Kotek and Member of the Joint Committee

Dear Legislators,

I live in rural Oregon where we are seeing the consequences of climate change, which has now become an emergency. I am distressed that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions keep rising in Oregon when we have few transportation options. We need to reduce those emissions as quickly as possible. Therefore, I ask you to make no cuts to land use planning staff, expenses and grant programs of the Department of Land Conservation and Development (LCDC).

In 1990 Governor Goldschmidt's Global Warming Task Force outlined actions the agencies would take on land use and transportation planning. Around 2004, another Task Force recommended GHG reduction goals and further action. These were adopted with HB 3543 in August of 2007. It set a firm goal reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 10% lower than emissions in 1990. Oregon did not meet that goal. We need to make up for lost time and quickly reduce emissions by taking action this year to our land use and transportation planning and projects.

The consequences of delaying actions on climate are huge -- higher implementation costs and greater risks of severe damages to our economy. A risk we should not take when our economy has been impacted by the corona virus.

Last month LCDC and the Land Conservation and Development Commission began moving to revise GHG emissions and transportation rules. Later this year LCDC will begin revising State Land Use Goals to incorporate climate impacts and emissions reductions. This work is vital to a manageable transition to our new climate realities. We cannot delay. LCDC has been low in staff for years. It has very small staff compared to other agencies. The historic approach to making cuts simply does not fit the situation. It would be like cutting the employees at the Health Authority that work on COVID.

Please preserve the funding for LCDC and other climate programs.

Sincerely,
Helen Kennedy

Cc Senator Lee Beyer
Representative Marty Wilde
Jim Rue, Director, DLCD

Dear Senator Coutney, Representative Kotek and members of the Committee

I write to ask that the Oregon Legislative terminate funds to the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. It has engaged in highly unethical and probably [illegal actions](#) by seeking to suppress and discredit forest climate research from OSU and others into the large contribution that current forest management is making to greenhouse gas emissions and destroying forest carbon and water storage. The research showed that the best strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was to increase cutting cycles allowing trees to absorb more carbon.

We need to start separating fact from fiction. Large corporations who do not pay a fair share of taxes are exploiting our forest to the detriment of Oregonians. Modern clearcutting greatly harms the forest's ability to store and sequester carbon. It harms water quality and water quantity in our salmon streams and watersheds in this time of long term drought. Modern clearcuts are not the same as ones from 30 years ago. They use large machines that destroy the undergrowth and microbiota, emptying the soil of its stored carbon. This needs to stop. Selective harvest adds jobs, preserves carbon, and decreases air emissions.

The actions of the Institute are disgraceful. Probably illegal according to Professor William Funk on Lewis & Clark Law School. Funding to it needs to be terminated now. Between now and the next session, the Legislature should explore ways to re-constitute the Institute so that ethics and the risks of the climate emergency and carbon sequestration can be embedded into its mission. Only then, in this time of budget cuts, should the Legislature consider funding the Institute.

Sincerely,

Helen Kennedy

Cc Senator Lee Beyer
Representative Marty Wilde