

March 30, 2021

Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Senator Lee Beyer, Chair  
Senator Lynn Findley, Vice-Chair

RE: Testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 541

Dear Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee:

I am in opposition to SB 541. The bill would establish a “policy of this state to include atmospheric carbon sequestered by the lands and waters of this state, including Oregon’s forests, desert lands and territorial sea, in any calculation to determine progress towards the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals”. On its face it makes no sense to conflate sequestration with emissions reduction goals.

As an experienced city planner — I worked for Gresham for nearly 30 years (I retired as their Planning Director) and hold a master’s degree in planning from Portland State — I have had first hand experience in GHG emission reduction goals having served on an advisory for Metro’s Climate Smart project’s and currently on LCDC’s Climate Friendly & Equitable Communities RAC - both being responses to GHG emission reductions.

The Oregon 2021 State Agency Climate Change Adaptation Framework defines *mitigation* — reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by reducing sources of these gases (e.g., the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat or transport) and *sequestration* — enhancing the “sinks” that accumulate and store these gases (e.g., the oceans, forests, and soil) as **separate** climate change responses that along with *adaptation* (actions implemented to adapt to life in a changed climate) are **all** necessary for a resilient Oregon.

The Oregon Global Warming Commission was directed by Governor Brown’s Executive Order 20-4 to submit a proposal for consideration of **adoption of state goals for carbon sequestration and storage by Oregon’s natural and working landscapes** based on best available science no later than June 30, 2021. That is the proper approach to address Oregon sequestration and goals and one the legislature should take up in a future session.

SB 541 does not serve Oregon’s needs to address climate change. It should not pass out of committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Harker, AICP  
Senate District 23

cc: Senator Michael Dembrow