

To: Co-Chairs Senator Johnson, Senator Hayward, Representative Rayfield, Co-Vice-Chairs Senator Girod, Representative Gomberg, Representative Smith and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.
From: Jane Stackhouse, Portland Oregon
Date: April 21, 2021
Re: The Oregon Budget

As I listen to testimony from my fellow Oregonians I am impressed with the number of excellent and urgent financial needs that face us. You have difficult decisions to make because, as we all know, our funds are limited and not all programs can possibly receive all of the funds they need and want. We are fortunate to have the American Rescue Plan Acts Funds available to us.

We are, hopefully, coming out of the global pandemic and will be able to see our economy improve. I believe if we focus our efforts on those people and sectors of the economy hardest hit by the pandemic we can recover more quickly. We need our citizens to be vaccinated so more businesses can open. We need new business development and we need to anticipate and build resiliency to cope with the next global crisis. Yes, there is another global crisis looming, that of climate change and global warming.

All of our day-to-day needs become minor when we consider the suffering and loss of life that this climate crisis is bringing us. The wild fires we have suffered over the past few years are but a small example. Imagine this level of loss on a global scale. President Biden says we should build back better and he's correct. As we build back, we must consider the impact of what and how we build to ensure our building actually decreases our greenhouse gas emissions. Our Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-04 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is essential to reducing emissions and to building back better. Please ensure that the agencies have sufficient funding to be able to carry out the Executive Order.

The Oregon Global Warming Commission must be fully staffed and funded to assist the Department of Forestry and Department of Agriculture to implement ways to use our productive forest and agricultural lands to sequester carbon in the atmosphere and to make our forests and soils healthier. Sound forest and agricultural practices will also improve water quality. The Department of Environmental Quality needs the staff available to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas and other toxic emissions. Their work on cleaner fuels can help reduce the 40% of our emissions that come from transportation. The Department of Transportation also has a big part to play in reducing these emissions. They need funds to support their Office of Climate and also direction to use their funds to build infrastructure that reduces emissions rather than expand freeways that only increase emissions. The Department of Land Use Conservation and Development can help us build diverse communities where everyone lives close to the goods and services they need. Where people can travel by foot or bicycle and, when longer travel is required, by mass transit. The department knows how to do this. Please fund them to involve the communities that will transition into communities that support a sustainable life style and value diversity.

These agencies have a lot of work to do very quickly. They need to include all members of the community and especially those most impacted by climate change. Please ensure that our environment, energy, natural resource and housing agencies are well funded to do the work of the Executive Order.