

February 21, 2021

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Senator Katheen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon, Co-Chairs
Members of the Committee

Re: **SB 5530 – Dept. of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Budget – Support**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 5530. The organizations submitting this testimony are a coalition of Oregon racial and social justice, environmental and climate justice, and land use and environmental conservation advocates working to advance policies that ensure meaningful participation and cultivate grassroots leadership from Oregon’s frontline and impacted communities.

We believe that the time is now to move forward long-needed reforms to our statewide land use planning goals. If our State is to adequately confront the 21st Century challenges presented by the climate crisis and systemic environmental racism, then we need a 21st Century planning system that is up to the task. It is for this reason that we support the Governor’s Recommended Budget, along with all of the Policy Option Packages (POPs). We focus this testimony on POP 90, which would allocate \$800,000 to “a review of Oregon’s land use planning goals and development of new rules for environmental justice, equity and climate.”¹

Oregon’s land use planning system has long been a national and international standard for responsible and deliberate land use planning, and has already achieved significant benefits in terms of greenhouse gas emissions reductions.² However, climate change is not yet an explicit consideration within any of Oregon’s 19 statewide land use planning goals. Land use planning is critical to reducing gases responsible for a warming climate. According to the U.S. Global Change Research Program’s Second State of the Climate Report (2018), ‘Emissions from the urban built environment are directly shaped by societal factors, including regulations and policies governing land use, technologies such as transportation, and indirect factors such as demands for goods and services produced outside city boundaries.’³

As a result, local governments have been and are currently making decisions regarding comprehensive plans, urban growth boundaries, and urban and rural reserves – decisions that are critical to the future of our communities – with insufficient (if any) consideration of the projected climate impacts on land use within their jurisdiction, nor the contribution of these decisions to bringing Oregon closer to or further away from its greenhouse gas reduction goals. POP 90 will allow DLCD to begin the important work of determining exactly how and in what circumstances climate change should be incorporated into our land use system.

¹ https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/About/Documents/2021-23GB-LegislationOverview_Jan2021.pdf

² Cathcart, J.F., et al. *Carbon Storage and Oregon’s Land-Use Planning Program*. Journal of Forestry (June 2007). <https://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/3143/PDF>

³ Cavallaro, N., et al. Second State of the Carbon Cycle Report (SOCCR2): A Sustained Assessment Report, USGCRP, 2018. Pg. 3. Report available online at carbon2018.globalchange.gov

We consider a single new statewide land use planning goal – a Goal 20 – to be the best and most expeditious means in the current state fiscal environment of addressing climate, equity and environmental justice in our statewide land use planning laws.

We know that the climate crisis did not emerge out of a vacuum: it is both a product of and exacerbates existing racial, social and socioeconomic inequities. Addressing climate change through land use therefore necessitates addressing deficits within our land use system. Oregon's Native American tribal communities, its Black, Latinx and other people of color, as well as the low income and rural communities that our organizations serve, have told us time and again that our current planning system simply does not serve them. A recent example was shared with the Land Conservation and Development Commission during their January 21, 2021 meeting. The Commissioners heard testimony from representatives of the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians regarding the all too frequent lack of consideration for impacts to historical and sacred sites in land use decision procedures.⁴

Consultation and inclusion in land use decision-making processes is often inadequate and insufficient in scope, and too often pollution and environmental risks and hazards are situated in the communities that can least afford and are least equipped to cope. We therefore greatly support DLCD's intention under POP 90 to address climate change, environmental justice and equity in the planning system in a holistic and integrated manner, which is the only way to prevent climate responses from reinforcing existing inequities.

We further believe that [HB 2488](#) provides the best legislative mechanism through which to implement the DLCD's objectives under POP 90. Forthcoming amendments to HB 2488 along with an approval of POP 90 will ensure that DLCD has the mandate, resources and direction to finalize the text of a Goal 20 within the 2021-2023 biennium following an appropriate consultative process. The approval of SB 5530 will set the agenda for climate and equity-responsive land use planning by Oregon's local governments and ensure that Oregon is prepared for the unique challenges of this century.

We urge you to support DLCD's budget and requested POPs, which will ensure that this crucial agency takes a comprehensive and rounded approach to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, equity, hazard risk reduction and environmental justice.

Signature

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⁴ See LCD Meeting 1/21/2021 at 1:17:00; accessible at https://lcd.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=1

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