

Submitter: Jane Stackhouse

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB522

I support bringing our climate goals and the role of the Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC) up to a higher 'modern' standard.

Renaming the Oregon Global Warming Commission will emphasize the importance of their work to take action on climate. The Oregon Climate Action Commission, as a name, stresses the important and urgent work of the Commission. That work is so critical that I disagree with the state greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Section 1 of SB 522 quietly ignores our failure to meet our original greenhouse gas reduction goals of reducing emissions by 10% below 1990 levels by 2020. We did manage to reduce per capita rates but as the population has increased the total has not decreased enough. I like bold goals and believe that the leveling we saw despite population increase is a positive sign. I have even greater appreciation for goals that are supported by science and the goals of 45% reduction by 2035 and 80% by 2050 are not sufficient. The IPCC reports tell us, using the best scientific modeling, that we must reduce emissions by 50% by 2035 and be at net zero by 2050. We can do this by reducing methane gas and increasing carbon sequestration and storage.

We are seeing the effect of climate change increase and we must remember that even after we reduce emissions we will only slowly decrease the actual parts per million on carbon dioxide in the atmosphere because the half life of CO₂ is long and the potency of methane is even higher than that of carbon dioxide. I request an amendment of Section 1 to incorporate the goals we actually need to achieve, not some compromise that will not change the outcome of habitat devastation.

Section 4 (4) requires state agencies report their efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change to the Commission. I would prefer that this section make clear that agencies will be held accountable to develop programs that will reduce emissions and provide adaptation. I see many situations where agencies seem to provide lip service or develop programs with potential that is never measures. We need Commission or administrative body that will monitor actual reductions in emissions and evaluate based on data. We have several solid solutions that need to be implemented now to be effective in time. Some agencies have more opportunity to reduce emission than others. The commission must look at the total projected and actual impact from all agencies.

The expansion of the Commission (Section 2) and the exofficio non-voting members to include more agencies (Section 3) is also important.

And all of this will take money. Please support the Oregon Climate Action Commission and provide enough staff to execute the Commissions directives. I hope that every Oregonian will see the new and empowered Oregon Climate Action Commission as a resource for data with the assistance of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, a champion for individual, state, and corporate action and accountability, and an inspiration for innovation. I am certain the good people who make up the Commission and those who will be added as a result of this bill are up for that challenge. Their reporting and recommendations have inspired my. The Commission deserves more recognition, more power, and more financial support. Please consider strengthen SB 522 to strengthen the Oregon Climate Action Commission.