



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment SB 522: Updating the Oregon Global Warming Commission

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

My name is Dr. Pat DeLaquil, and I am an energy system modeller and climate policy expert and resident of Gresham. I organize with the Metro Climate Action Team, which is a community of volunteers working to ensure Oregon is a leader in addressing the climate crisis. We support SB 522, but believe there are several areas which need improvement or additional action.

The Oregon Global Warming Commission has been working on a report called the Roadmap to 2035. It is currently in draft form, but is due to be released to you in final form in the next few weeks. It includes Six Overarching Strategies which we support:

1. Support continued implementation of climate programs and regulations adopted and under development.
2. Adopt updated state greenhouse gas reduction goals consistent with the best available science.
3. Advance a set of additional climate actions that can help the state meet an accelerated greenhouse gas reduction goal of 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.
4. Fund future studies to continue to guide climate action over time.
5. Strengthen governance and accountability for Oregon climate action.
6. Position the state to take full advantage of federal investments in climate action.

SB 522 will make long-overdue updates to the name, coordination role, and duties of the Commission and expand its membership. However, we do not see where the bill provides additional staffing and resources needed to carry out these additional responsibilities.

SB 522 also updates Oregon's statutory sector-based greenhouse gas emission reduction goals to align with the targets identified in Executive Order 20-04, but the Commission's Roadmap Report will recommend state goals of at least 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; at least 70 percent below 1990 levels by 2040; and at least [90 or 95] percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Based on the analysis and policy recommendations in that report, we urge the committee to strengthen the state's goals in line with the Roadmap recommendations, including a net zero target by 2050.

SB 522 makes important improvements to the Governance & Accountability of the Commission by expanding the statutory list of ex officio non-voting members to include representatives from eight state agencies involved in climate action, and by expanding the voting membership to include a youth representative and a member with experience in environmental justice. These agencies will be required to annually report on their climate work and progress to the Commission, and the Commission will be required to prepare detailed forecast of expected GHG emission reductions.

Importantly, SB 522 declares that it is state policy for state and local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations and individual residents to prepare for the effects of global warming and by doing so, prevent and reduce the social, economic and environmental effects of global warming. However, we believe the statement should go further and require state agencies and local governments to consider and integrate climate mitigation, adaptation and equity in decision making and provide adequate resources to build capacity to facilitate this process.



Finally, SB 522 authorizes the Commission to conduct a periodic evaluation of the state's climate goals based on the best available science and recommend updated goals to the Legislature. Furthermore, SB 522 directs the Commission to periodically prepare a detailed forecast of expected greenhouse gas emissions reductions to assess progress towards meeting the state's GHG emission reduction goals at the sector level, and to recommend additional policies if they appear needed to meet the goals.

However, as noted above, our main concern is that this bill does not provide the additional staffing and resources needed to expand the Commission's capabilities to meet these new responsibilities. While it's likely that these resources will need to be included in Agency budgets, it's not clear when and how that will happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Dr. Pat DeLaquil, on behalf of the Metro Climate Action Team Steering Committee: Brett Baylor, Rick Brown, Linda Craig, Dan Frye, Debby Garman, KB Mercer, Michael Mitton, Rich Peppers, Rand Schenck, Jane Stackhouse, and Catherine Thomasson