



# SIERRA CLUB

## OREGON CHAPTER

Oregon State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

February 15, 2024

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 1559** Relating to Climate Change

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and Senators Golden, Hayden, and Lieber,

On behalf of the more than 74,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, we write in support of Senate Bill 1559 Relating to Climate Change.

A December 2004 report written by the Governor’s Advisory Group on Global Warming alerted Oregonians to the impending risks of climate change, and made 46 recommendations for quantifiable reductions to Oregon’s greenhouse gas emissions. These threats were outlined in the widely accepted “Scientific Consensus Statement on the Likely Impacts of Climate Change on the Pacific Northwest.”

Critical factors examined in that report included temperature, precipitation, sea level, marine ecosystems and terrestrial ecosystems. Report recommendations addressed the need for improved scientific studies and modeling of the effects of climate change and management policies on the atmosphere, oceans and land, health, the economy, and quality of life.

SB 522 was pivotal 2023 legislation laying groundwork for Oregon’s momentous Oregon Climate Action Commission (CAC) mandate to analyze and identify action across all sectors to reduce GHG emissions, while growing Oregon’s economy and improving equity and quality of life.

In 2024, SB 1559 makes requisite updates to SB 522 language, terminology and GHG emission reduction goals consistent with practices to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The bill replaces the term “global warming” with “climate change”, reflecting the

more common terminology in use today. As in SB 522, the CAC is mandated to track, assess, measure, evaluate, recommend and report on similar factors, goals and progress toward meeting net zero and net negative emissions goals.

SB 1559 reiterates that it is Oregon policy for state and local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and individuals to prepare for the effects of climate change and by doing so, prevent and reduce the social, economic and environmental effects of the global climate crisis.

With more determinative global climate data available in 2024, and recognition of the increased urgency for consequential, coordinated progress, the need to further tighten GHG emissions reduction goals established in SB 522 is addressed in the 2024 legislative session in SB 1559:

From base year 1990 levels:

- a) the 2035 goal of 45% reduction is now accelerated five years to 2030;
- b) the 2040 goal is boosted to 70%; and
- c) the 2050 goal is strengthened from 75% to 95% reduction in GHG emissions.

These goals are consistent with Oregon’s “aspiration to achieve net zero emissions as soon as practicable, no later than 2050, and to maintain net negative emissions thereafter.” SB 1559 distinguishes net negative emissions as “the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere being less than the amount of greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere,” as opposed to net zero emissions.

Restated in SB 1559 is the injunction for the Oregon Climate Action Commission 1) to periodically evaluate GHG emission reduction goals, the net zero emissions goals and the net negative emissions goals, and 2) to make recommendations and report to the Legislature for updating those goals based on the best available science, no later than 18 months after the IPCC’s latest report, or the US Global Change Research Program’s published national climate assessment.

In addition, the Commission is required to submit a report to the Legislature by December 1 of each even-numbered year that “describes Oregon’s progress toward achievement of the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, which may include relevant issues and trends of significance, including trends of greenhouse gas emissions, emerging public

policy and technological advances, and measures Oregon may adopt to mitigate and prepare for the impacts of climate change on the environment, the economy, and residents.”

SB 1559 exhorts “state and local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations and individual residents to prepare for the effects of climate change and by doing so, prevent and reduce the social, economic and environmental effects of climate change.”

The leadership intent of SB 1559 is clear: to mandate common, collective, all-sector, all-hands, science-based policies to expand Oregon’s climate knowledge bank and practices; to widely disseminate evolving strategic information; to harden state and natural resources against the effects of climate change; to leverage Oregon’s assets in natural and working lands; and to blueprint critical climate action models for other states. In short, Oregon strives to create a safer climate future for all life, human and otherwise, and for our natural environment.

The Oregon Sierra Club unequivocally endorses and urges the passage of SB 1559 in this 2024 Legislative Session.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Damon Motz-Storey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Damon" written in a smaller, more legible script than the last name "Motz-Storey".

Damon Motz-Storey, Chapter Director  
Sierra Club Oregon Chapter