

June 10, 2015

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From:  
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RE: Support of HB 3470-A and Opposition to SB 965

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

The mission of the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity. Formed in 2001, the Coalition is an alliance of 20 culturally specific community based organizations with representation from six communities of color: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic.

CCC supports an equitable carbon management program in Oregon that will 1) offer protection from disproportionate financial impacts of climate change and policy while, 2) creating economic opportunities for low-income communities of color and 3) supporting more resilient communities. **The State of Oregon has a unique opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and provide multiple co-benefits through HB 3470-A while supporting an inclusive and accountable policy development and implementation process. SB 965 fails to support an inclusive process or the reinvestment needs of low-income communities of color and Oregon's future green economy.**

Communities of color make up 25% of Oregon's population, including 40% of children aged zero to five. Additionally, people of color's support for the environment is generally higher than the white population—on average 20% higher than white Americans<sup>1</sup>. While climate change is a major threat to the quality of life for all Oregonians, it has a disproportionate impact on the physical, mental, financial and cultural wellbeing of communities of color and low-income communities. Persistent problems include lack of access to healthy foods, employment and transit; worse air, soil and water quality in proximity to our most ethnically diverse neighborhoods; increased temperature in urban heat islands contributing to illnesses and deaths; degradation of air quality linked to asthma and cardiovascular disease; and a limited ability to respond to increasing costs of energy, housing and food. Our children and communities are already bearing the brunt of environmental and economic inequities—such as housing in high traffic pollution corridors and alarming poverty rates—and our lives are literally more threatened by climate impacts than the average Oregonian.

CCC strongly urges members of the Committee to support a carbon management program, which will provide a framework for thorough analysis by multiple entities and meaningful engagement of the State's most under-served and under-represented communities. For centuries our communities have lacked authentic representation across policy-making decisions, resulting in widespread and entrenched inequities. **Communities of color and environmental justice advocates must be integral to the**

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center

**decision-making body and design of a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan. HB 3470-A lays this foundation, but SB 965 fails to support the most central tenet of environmental and social justice—meaningful engagement and consultation of those most impacted by environmental policies.**

Oregon must do more to address climate change and must design and pass equitable carbon management policies. **Doing so is a win-win: through HB 3470-A we have a unique opportunity to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and climate policy and to yield direct economic and environmental benefits in communities most vulnerable to impacts of climate change.** But this won't happen by itself. We must be intentional about creating these opportunities. We should maximize connecting new and existing job training and entrepreneurship support efforts within community economic development organizations to investments in residential clean energy and green infrastructure.

Other examples of equitable policies include:

- Monthly financial assistance to the lowest-income household—those on fixed income or living paycheck to paycheck. **Annual rebates don't work for everyone.**
- Prioritizing carbon pollution reduction efforts to **maximize health benefits for communities of color.**
- Creating a **community reinvestment fund**, as was done in California under SB 535.

Again, **we urge the Committee to support an equitable carbon management program such as HB 3470-A**, which emphasizes co-benefits: GHG emission reduction as well as reduction of existing racial disparities, in particular those exacerbated by climate change and institutional and systemic inequities. **SB 965 has the potential to increase financial burdens on our lowest income communities and perpetuate ongoing disparities through lack of meaningful consultation or equitable investment.** Any resulting climate policy or program should aim to not just mitigate, but also reverse historical and ongoing inequities. These values should be reflected throughout the bill and in program design and implementation.

Thank you again for your leadership and careful consideration of HB 3470-A. and SB 965

Sincerely,



Margaret Tallmadge  
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Coalition of Communities of Color