

June 10, 2015

To: Senator Edwards, Chair, and Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee Members

I am submitting this letter to the committee as an Oregon resident.

I hope that we have a meaningful and robust informational hearing today. The topic could not be more timely and significant. Climate change/warming is upon us even here in Oregon. Witness the drought, low snowfall, dry and dying forests, invasive species, large forest fires etc.

As recently as this weekend, my wife and I drove through Columbia Gorge and were shocked to see that the majority of the conifers there are not healthy. There is documented beetle infestation in the Gorge, and it surely looks like it's beginning to take a heavy toll.

As we look to mitigate and adapt, there can be no more important concept than internalizing the actual costs of fossil fuels, something that should have been done a long time ago. We cannot continue to price fossil fuels unreasonably low, and to encourage more investment in that industry. We have kicked this "can" down the road for too long.

Carbon pricing (carbon tax, cap & trade, cap & dividend) must be implemented, using the free market to spread the effect through the economy. As has been shown, this can be done without hurting the economy if we start now. As the pricing increases it will clearly drive the market to alternative energy sources, a very important first step. I strongly believe that any carbon pricing measure needs to be revenue neutral, thus financially helping the majority of citizens during the transition to "green" energy.

Oregon needs to join with other states (California, NE states in RGGI), and with our Canadian cousins (Alberta, Victoria BC, Quebec, Ontario), to send a strong message to our national leaders that we will implement state programs to initiate what must ultimately be done at the national level.

There is actually strong support all through our country and population for carbon pricing. Two examples are The Climate Declaration (more than 1,000 large and prominent business and individuals nationwide have signed) and the Oregon Business Climate Declaration (400 plus signatories, including Intel, Nike, Ikea, Moda, etc). These groups understand the problem and want to be part of the solution. They need us to show certainty and commitment, so that they can start to plan and invest appropriately.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in this discussion.

Hans West M.D.

545 Waldo Ave SE  
Salem, Or 07302