

ecotrust.org

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721 NW Ninth Avenue  
Suite 200  
Portland, Oregon  
97209

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**TEL** +1.503.227.6225

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**FAX** +1.503.222.1517

Dear Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resource Committee:

I'm writing in support of SB 1507.

Turning the tide on climate change is one of the most urgent challenges facing humanity today. Transitioning to a clean energy economy is essential, but reducing fossil fuel emissions is not enough. We also must rapidly--and massively--draw down greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and invest in the frontline communities most vulnerable to the impacts of global warming.

Oregon's Clean Energy Jobs bill is a step in the right direction on all counts. A meaningful price on carbon is critical. But so are smart investments in rural and urban communities designed to ensure benefits for impacted communities while advancing climate-smart land use practices that will actively draw carbon down from the atmosphere.

Here in Oregon and across the region, we are already feeling the effects of climate change--increasingly devastating wildfires, rising seas and ocean acidification, reduced snowpack and warming temperatures-- that impact our homes, our health, our livelihoods, critical habitat for salmon and other wildlife, and our economy.

But at the same time, our region offers some of the best solutions to a rapidly warming world: Currently, Oregon's forests alone store 3 billion tons of carbon, which is equivalent to nearly 10 billion tons of CO2. Managing our forests well to increase the carbon they can store, alongside the timber they produce, is not only climate-smart, but can sustain quality rural jobs and ensure the many benefits we count on our forests provide--clean air, clean and reliable drinking water, habitat for wildlife, recreation opportunities, and a strong and diverse forest products industry.

Our farms, ranches, coastal wetlands, and green buildings also offer significant opportunities for investment in climate-smart solutions to benefit our communities and economies. But smart regulatory measures and incentives are an essential foundation to ensure that these kinds of regenerative land practices make as much financial sense as they do common sense.

While the Paris agreement has stalled at the federal level, cities, states, and regions have to carry the ball and push harder now--and here on the West Coast, we have the political leadership to join together and make a real difference with smart regulation and incentives for investment in frontline communities--both rural and urban. Passing legislation is of course only the first step--engaging diverse stakeholders and citizens in effective and appropriate implementation will be critical.

The Oregon legislature has a huge opportunity--a responsibility in fact--to push forward the Clean Energy Jobs bill this week. It is time to put a price on carbon and shift Oregon towards a climate-smart economy.



Jeremy Barnicle  
Executive Director, Ecotrust