

I am writing today in support of SJM 5-1 - the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act

In the 70's when I was enthusiastically supporting the emerging science-based ecology movement, I never, ever, would have imagined that in 2021 we would still be dithering over how (or in some cases, even whether) to move our economies from fossil-based to sustainable fuels. The intervening decades of research and lived experience surely tell us that we are so very nearly out of time to deal with this.

From my home in the Columbia River Gorge, I have witnessed global warming on an intimate scale, as the seasonal creek that used to pulse across my landscape has failed to appear at all in recent years. The grasses turn brown earlier in the summer, the wildflowers dry out before they can set seed, the beetles find drought-stressed trees an easy target.

On August 12th, 2020 I was on my hands and knees, creating a border of paver sand around my shop, as part of my efforts to mitigate wildfire threat. The light seemed too rosy for mid-afternoon, so I decided that it must be closer to sundown than I'd thought. When I finished my section 15 minutes later and looked up, I was fear-struck by a wall of black and red smoke rearing up behind my house and below my deck. It became known as The Mosier Creek Fire.

As I raced around, trying to recall best practices for emergency fire evacuation, I was thankful that my grand-children were not with me. In the end, my house was spared, but others were not. Fire-fighting crews on the ground and in the air put their lives at risk for a couple of weeks trying to suppress and control the damage being done. Living for days in a dense cloud of smoke was disorienting and surreal. I was thankful for my luck in having relatively good respiratory health.

And I keep thinking, "Why is this happening? What are we waiting for? We have known for decades what is causing climate change, and yet we do nothing effective to stop it."

This Bill SJM 5-1 is a very reasonable, revenue-neutral, well-conceived, market-based, bi-partisan attempt to do some of what needs to be done. It incentivizes individuals and corporations to support what common sense, good will and long-term self-preservation instincts alone seem unable to accomplish.

Thank you for considering this plea that you support it.
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