

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Helm and Smith, and Members of the House Committee on Energy and the Environment,

Now is the time to move forward long-needed reforms to our statewide land use planning goals. If our state is to adequately confront the 21st Century challenges presented by the climate crisis and systemic environmental racism, then we need a 21st Century planning system that is up to the task. For that reason, I urge you to support HB 2488—Equity and Climate Justice in Land Use, to ensure that Oregon's land use planning system includes a comprehensive and rounded approach to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, equity, hazard risk reduction and environmental justice.

Oregon's land use planning system fails to explicitly consider climate change within any of the 19 statewide land use planning goals. A single new statewide land use planning goal—Goal 20—would ensure that climate, equity and environmental justice are addressed in our statewide land use planning decisions. Local governments have been and are currently making critical decisions regarding comprehensive plans, urban growth boundaries, and urban and rural reserves without sufficient consideration (if any) of either the projected climate impacts of land use decisions within their jurisdiction or whether these decisions will help achieve Oregon's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. According to the U.S. Global Change Research Program's Second State of the Carbon Cycle Report (2018), 'Emissions from the urban built environment are directly shaped by societal factors, including regulations and policies governing land use, technologies such as transportation, and indirect factors such as demands for goods and services produced outside city boundaries.'

Further, we know that the climate crisis did not emerge out of a vacuum: it is both a product of and exacerbates existing racial, social and socioeconomic inequities. Oregon's Native American governments and tribal communities, Black, Latinx and other people of color, as well as low income and under-resourced rural communities, have told us time and again that our current planning system simply does not serve them. Consultation and inclusion in land use decision-making processes is often inadequate and insufficient in scope. Pollution and environmental risks and hazards are too often situated in the communities that can least afford those hazards and are least equipped to cope. This is increasingly the very obvious case in Keizer, Oregon and the south side of Salem, Oregon, where industrial parkways built long ago may have been partially abandoned to clear yet more greenspace to build something new, yet nothing is done to dig up, clean, and replant the now-blighted city blocks that only create unnecessary heat in summer. These could readily be used as small local carbon sinks, and urban planners have long known that neighborhoods with more trees experience better health and higher value.

I therefore strongly support the passage of HB 2488. I also urge you to support the recommended budget of \$800,000 to both initiate and finish the adoption of a new Goal 20 for Equity and Climate in this biennium. There is positive forward movement in securing funding in that the Department of Land Conservation and Development included \$800,000 in Package 90 for Equity Initiatives as part of their proposed agency budget (see SB 5530). In addition, in order to provide adequate technical assistance to underserved rural communities and smaller cities and counties, a recommendation from the House Energy and Environment Committee for additional funding allocations would be appreciated. HB 2488 will guarantee climate and equity-responsive land use planning by Oregon's local governments and ensure that Oregon is prepared for the unique challenges of this century.

Thank you for considering my comments and creating an equitable and climate-smart future for Oregon.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Gordon, Keizer