

The devastating impact of climate change surrounds us. The fires that engulfed our state in 2020 follow years of increasingly worse and longer fire seasons. For those of us living in Southern Oregon, smokey summers are the new normal. We need to change this.

The problem is not just an Oregon problem. I served in Namibia as a United States Peace Corp volunteer from 2016-2018. I called my Namibian mother earlier this month, the middle of the Namibian rainy season, and asked if it had rained yet. She laughed and said “No”. I said “Wasn't it nice when it used to rain?” Namibia was already a dry country. My village relied on four to five days of rain a year in order to grow our millet crop. It saddens me that going forward my second home will continue to experience more and more rainless years.

Since returning from the Peace Corps, I have been working with the Southern Oregon Citizens' Climate Lobby and the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers for Environmental Action to advance effective federal climate policy, with our key focus being a bipartisan bill that has a substantive price on carbon. The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act is an exemplary bill that creates an equal economic incentive for producers to reduce their carbon footprint. The choice to return the funds collected by the fee as a dividend ensures that American households, especially low income households, will not be negatively impacted by the legislation. The border adjustment ensures that the bill will not impact the competitiveness of U.S. (or Oregon) goods internationally and will pressure other countries to adopt similar carbon pricing policies. The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act is more appealing than other forms of federal climate policy because it does not add new regulations, nor does it require increased federal spending.

On a whole, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act is a win for Oregon, a win for the United States and a win for the world. Oregon's decision to pass Senate Joint Memorial 5 is a critical step forward for this legislation. Climate change is the issue that will define my generation, and carbon pricing is a key first step to addressing it.

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