

Testimony Opposing HB 3022

To: Chair Marsh and House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment members
From: John Weigant, Climate Activist and retired Software Development Consultant
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HB 3022 sets extremely bad policy. It seems simple enough, nine lines, targeting just two Executive Department agencies on a narrow topic: motor fuel. But it overrides the balanced structure of our Oregon and Federal Constitutions. It sets terrible precedent.

1. My qualifications to testify: I've been a physics teacher, an urban planner, a software developer, and a teacher of software development to professional software engineers. My MUP thesis project was writing computer programs to project future populations. Now retired, I'm a futurist and climate activist.
2. A software background is relevant, because software is written instructions about how things should work, just like legislation and rules. Quality assurance is needed for both.
3. The laws of physics supersede political laws. In particular, the laws of conservation of mass and energy say there are *Limits to Growth*. The law of conservation of momentum, when applied to the mass of humanity and the increasing velocity of our development, say we are headed to a collision with physical growth limits. Climate change is our warning we will shatter about mid-century. We can expect human population to be cut by about half, following the ancient processes of War, Famine, Plague and Strife.
4. In the past, when a place filled beyond nature's carrying capacity, we moved to new places. No hospitable place is left close enough to go to. We are Earthbound.
5. One thing has no apparent limits, and has grown *exponentially* for about 4 billion years on earth: Information. Each of you already understands evolution, and how the **quality** of information has constantly increased, while its **quantity** has been limited by available mass and energy. Software—pure information—has taught us much about information.
6. There are two basic models for learning: (1) Get it right the first time, and (2) Learn by trial and error. Legislation and rules follow similar learning paths.
7. In 1776 old rules changed: (1) American colonies chose self-government; (2) James Watt installed the first rotary steam engine, adding vast new energy source to do human work; and (3) Adam Smith explained capitalism, an economic system that assumed growth could feed itself perpetually, letting an “invisible hand” run things.
8. The colonies Confederation was dysfunctional, so they formed a balanced, three-branch government that separated powers. The Legislative branch followed learning model (1), now called “How a bill becomes a law.” The Executive branch, to execute the nation's business, had to make quick decisions. It followed learning model (2), establishing expert departments who could write good rules faster than bills could become laws. Of course errors occurred, but learning was faster, and so were corrections.
9. Fundamentally, government balances conflict from two sources. Conservatives look back, preferring what has worked in the past. Progressives peek at the future, less certain, but far more relevant to survival. Action is needed now, to set a better future for our children, a perpetual goal of life. HB 3022 looks backward, not forward. Kill it now.