

February 20, 2023

FROM: Jonathan Harker, AICP

TO: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Senator Janeen Sollman, Chair
Senator Lynn Findley, Co-Chair

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 522 - Oregon Climate Action Commission

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 522- Oregon Climate Action Commission.

I am testifying today as a retired city land use planner with 30 years of experience in Oregon city planning and as someone who has continued to be active in land use issues related to climate change and equity. At retirement I was the City of Gresham's Planning Director. I am also testifying as the grandparent of a 16-month old grandson and 4-month granddaughter.

SB 522 makes several changes to the current Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC) that will strengthen the Commission's effectiveness in achieving Oregon's greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction goals and addressing the impacts of climate change.

The litany of how climate change is impacting Oregonians is well known but worth repeating: extreme heat; droughts; heavy rains and flooding; wild fires; sea rise; slope instability, and changes to vegetation zones among other impacts. These impacts Oregon is experiencing today will only increase without urgent action to reduce GHG emissions which underscores the importance of enacting SB 522.

Changes to what would be renamed the Oregon Climate Change Commission (OCCA) in SB 522 that I would like to call out as critical are:

- Setting a new interim (2035) GHG reduction goal and increasing the goal for 2050. Oregon is falling behind on meeting its current goals and this change emphasizes the need to increase our reduction efforts.
- Increasing the diversity of its membership and acknowledging the inequitable impacts climate change has on some communities and will have on our youth by adding an environmental justice expert and a youth representative.
- Adding to the ex-officio membership additional State agencies, all of which have a role in reducing GHG emissions. As a planner I was encouraged to see the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) included in those additions. I was on the rules advisory committee for the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking which was adopted this past July and know first hand the important role DLCD has in acting on GHG emissions reduction.
- Requiring State agencies to report at least once a year to the OCAC which will promote both accountability as well as the Commission's understanding of where the State is at on its goals and thus what actions are needed to meet those goals.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 522. I sincerely hope that the legislature will enact the bill to help my grandchildren enjoy and prosper in living their lives as I have been able to do.