

Letter from Linda Craig
Portland
February 20, 2023

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, members of the Committee:

In 2004, Governor Kulongoski named a Governor's Advisory Group on Global Warming. Its recommendations resulted in the passage of HB 3543 in 2007. The new law established the Oregon Global Warming Commission and the greenhouse gas reduction goals that still, today, remain in Oregon law.

HB 3543 charged the Commission with recommending ways to coordinate state and local efforts to reduce Oregon's GHG emissions consistent with the goals; to recommend efforts to help the state, local government, businesses, and residents prepare for the effects of global warming; and to report to the legislature every two years.

From inception in 2008 under its first Chair, Angus Duncan, the Commission set a solid direction and recommendations for climate action, and their first report anticipated that Oregon would meet the first goal established by the enabling legislation —by 2010 to arrest and reverse Oregon's historical trend of emissions rising each year. The other goals established were to achieve a 10% GHG reduction from 1990 levels by 2020 and a 75% reduction by 2050.

After the 2010 goal was met, probably not because of successful state policy, but because the recession of 2008 slowed business activity, the trends were not good for many years. In his letter at the beginning of the 2018 report, discouraged by Oregon's failure to act, Chair Duncan quoted Winston Churchill:

"Owing to past neglect, in the face of the plainest warnings, we have now entered upon a period of danger...The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences...We cannot avoid this period; we are in it now." — Winston Churchill, in the House of Commons, November 1936

The Commission's 2020 report confirmed that the 2020 emission reduction goal was missed by 26%!

Although they had little good news to report, the Global Warming Commission faithfully reported every two years, continuing to make recommendations to push state agencies and elected officials to do a better job.

Along the way, the Commission recognized new opportunities. In 2017, they began the important work to encourage the extensive carbon sequestration that can occur with good management of Oregon's forests, and now they have expanded this work to include other working lands. Their recommendations form the basis for the Natural Climate Solutions bill, SB 530, which would push these exciting concepts along.

Soon, you will see the Commission's Roadmap to 2023 (due to be released in March). To build the Roadmap, they contracted for modeling by Sustainability Solutions Group. The modeling shows that Oregon's climate goals can still be met if, and only if, existing climate programs are diligently implemented, and new recommended policies are put in place. **Not only will the climate goals be met, but by adopting the Commission's recommendations, Oregonians will be healthier, jobs will be created, and the economy will be more robust.** The results are reported by county so that each part of Oregon can see how they will be affected.

Members of this Committee and other legislators and elected officials have asked how we will know whether our climate programs are meeting their goals. The answer is that you will know how we are doing if the ***Oregon Climate Action Commission*** is given the authority and the resources to coordinate the data and forecast the future to keep us on target.

I urge you to pass SB 522 with strengthening amendments.