



SIERRA CLUB

OREGON CHAPTER

February 23, 2023

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Bill 522, Relating to the Global Warming Commission

Chair Dembrow, Senator Golden and Representative Helm, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

On behalf of the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club's 74,000 members and supporters, we appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 522. We strongly urge you to vote YES to advance this bill.

SB 522 establishes the Oregon Climate Action Commission "OCAC" to replace the outmoded Oregon Global Warming Commission and creates important new provisions. OCAC is the dynamic engine Oregon needs to 1) create state policy to reduce Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions; and 2) prepare the state for the effects of global warming and our need to forestall the adverse social, economic and environmental effects of planetary warming.

We applaud commission membership expansion to 35, which will benefit from the synergy among state economic, social justice, environmental, and cultural diverse representatives, including a young person whose stake in the future is on the line. This leadership from public and private spheres—a chowder, if you will, of talented minds collaborating in common earnest purpose—are positioned to empower OCAC to energize Oregon's climate action progress.

SB 522 taps Oregon State University to be a strategic player in implementing OCAC's goals by establishing the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute. This will center research, technical assistance, database resources, educational materials, and innovation to make publicly available a plethora of tools and information to support a spectrum of sectors to enable meaningful gains in climate remediation work. Funding of all efforts outlined in the bill should be secured.

The bill calls for outreach strategies to educate all and sundry parties about the science and impacts of global warming, about government and current policies-strategies-solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and about how Oregonians can incorporate effective climate-positive practices and attitudes, while preparing for the repercussions of a planetary warming future.

Oregon Dept. of Energy's Transformative Integrated Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction (TIGHGER) Plan will be an instrumental resource by analyzing and identifying action across all sectors that can reduce GHG emissions, while growing Oregon's economy and enhancing equity and quality of life.

We applaud the provision to incorporate the requisite function of tracking and evaluating the factors called out in the bill marking climate warming impacts, risks, social costs, preparation, remediation, etc. We support other information, policies or analyses that the commission determines will aid in the forecast and achievement of greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, to be disseminated through regular and accessible climate progress reports.

This bill provides for periodic OCAC recommendations to the Legislature to strengthen greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals based on the best available science. We respectfully request that the Legislature consider even more muscular greenhouse gas reduction targets than currently cited in SB 522; in other words, incorporate new targets that are 45% below 1990 levels by 2030, 70% below 1990 levels by 2040, and 95% below 1990 levels by 2050. Let's be ambitious.

The leadership intent of this bill is clear: to mandate common, collective, all-sector, all-hands, science-based policies to expand Oregon's climate knowledge bank and practices; to widely disseminate evolving strategic information; to harden the state and natural resources against the effects of global warming; to leverage Oregon's assets in natural and working lands; and to model a blueprint for effective climate action in other states.

With SB 530 and SB 522, Oregon has the potential to achieve great strides toward reaching its climate goals and a safer future for inhabitants, human and otherwise, and for our natural environment. SB 530 and SB 522 offer a convergence of policies, resources, and actions that so many Oregonians have envisioned (and hoping) might be forthcoming from the Legislature. Oregon is ready for these. We hold high expectations that Oregon's legislative leadership will inspire other entities to forge ahead to implement the mechanisms needed to tackle what our Climate Future may hold.

This is the moment. Thank you for your convictions, your thoughtful and courageous efforts in bringing these two bills before the people's house, in order to, in the vernacular, get on with it.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Dix, Chair
Legislative Committee
Oregon Chapter Sierra Club