



To: Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee
From: Shannon Walton-Clark, Senior Policy Manager
Date: April 8, 2023
RE: Support for Climate Focused Budget

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, Members of the Committee

My name is Shannon Walton-Clark, and I am the Senior Policy Manager at Forth. We are a nonprofit trade association that advocates for the advancement of transportation electrification across all sectors. Our membership includes more than 200 organizations, including industry partners, utility companies, charging suppliers, state agencies, municipalities, auto manufacturers, environmental organizations, community based and environmental justice organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of a strong, strategic, climate-smart 23-25 biennium budget.

This budget presents a vital opportunity to prioritize climate change.

Unfortunately, key investments outlined in the [People's Budget](#), including increases for climate resilience, are not adequately funded under the Co-Chairs Budget Framework.

Legislators must invest in climate and communities now, rather than reserving even more revenue in our already strong and healthy rainy-day fund.

I want to specifically highlight the need for full funding of Oregon's Clean Vehicle Rebate Program. I wanted to start with a brief background of the (OCVRP). The program was created as a part of the 2017 Transportation Package (HB 2017). The Standard Rebate offers up to a \$2,500 cash rebate to all Oregon drivers who purchase or lease a new electric vehicle (EV) with a MSRP under \$50,000. The Charge Ahead Rebate offers low-and moderate-income Oregonians an additional \$5,000 cash for a total of \$7,500 for the purchase of a new or used EV.

The Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program is a national model and has inspired similar programs in Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Currently, Washington is exploring how to shift their tax incentive program into a rebate program to increase usage and equity.

In 2022, Oregon had the second highest purchase rate of new ZEVs. However, currently ZEVs account for only ~5% of the total vehicle fleet. There is still much work to be done to decarbonize the light-duty passenger vehicles. Despite this achievement, we remain behind in meeting our goals for ZEV adoption, as outlined in SB 1044 (2019). SB 1044 placed a goal of 250,000 registered ZEVs by 2025. As of November 2022, according to ODOT, there are only 60,623 ZEVs registered, compared to 3.4 million total vehicles currently registered in Oregon.

The rebate program has assisted over 25,000 Oregonians in the transition to electric vehicles and has helped close a substantial affordability gap. Unfortunately, this program is about to enter a period of suspension due to the lack of funding.

Without action by the Legislature, Oregon's EV rebate will end on May 1.

The rebate is a key mechanism for allowing everyday Oregonians to purchase an EV. This rebate is the key to widespread decarbonization.

Forth urges a one-time funding allocation to help the program come out of suspension and maintain current service levels through the next biennium. House Bill 2613 would fully fund the rebate and will greatly help the State in achieving our greenhouse gas emissions reduction and air quality goals.

The devastating impacts of climate change are being felt across our state and it is vitally important that we equip our agencies with the necessary resources to help combat and mitigate the effects of climate change.

For every new gasoline or diesel-powered vehicle that is purchased, Oregon is making a 20 year investment into the pollution generated by that car. We know the disastrous impacts of widespread pollution disproportionately affect our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of a climate resiliency focused budget and respectfully request full funding of the OCVRP which will be suspended May 1.

FORTH Empowering Mobility

Shannon Walton-Clark (*they, them, theirs*) | Senior Policy Manager

shanonwc@forthmobility.org | C: 916.541.8998