

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

SOCAN

Confronting Climate Change

<https://socan.eco>

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Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means:

I write as cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN), an organization of over 2,000 rural Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and urge statewide action to address it. The mission of SOCAN is to promote awareness and understanding of the science of global warming and its climate chaos consequences and stimulate individual and collective action to address it. Since rural Oregonians occupy the frontlines in experiencing the impact of the drought, shrinking snowpack, wildfires and extreme weather that the climate crisis imposes, we are strongly committed to statewide action.

For nearly a decade, a statewide coalition of Oregonians who are climate conscious had collaborated with legislators who are also sensitive to the climate crisis to establish in Oregon a program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote carbon sequestration in our natural and working lands. Because of the resistance of some legislators, establishing a comprehensive greenhouse gas emissions reduction program has proven impossible. As a result, two years ago Governor Kate Brown signed Executive Order 20-04 charging agencies with relevant authority to develop programs that would reduce emissions and promote sequestration and do so within the framework of promoting climate justice.

As a result, a number of valuable programs have been developed by the agencies to promote emissions reductions. There are, however, two catches in this effort:

1. The first is that agency actions dependent for their authority on the Governor's Executive Order are only effective as long as we have a Governor who is committed to this program, and,
2. In order to be successful, some of these programs need adequate funding.

Fortunately, in 2022 Oregon voters made it clear in their votes for both chambers and the Governorship that addressing the climate crisis is a priority. Another timely plus is that, thanks entirely to the efforts of President Biden and a Democratically controlled House and Senate we now have available billions of dollars of federal funds which the state can access (i) if we have

programs allowing agencies to apply for the funds AND (ii) if we have state dollars that can be provided as matching funds to secure those federal dollars.

The state is confronted with a critical moment of decision. Are we willing to elevate our state's contribution to addressing the climate crisis sufficiently that we will allocate state dollars to set it in motion. These funds can enable state agencies to access federal dollars. If we fail to allocate funds to this effort, the state will be justifiably accused of simply paying lip service to the commitment to address the climate crisis without any real conviction.

We understand that there exist many needs in the state demanding funding. However, we argue that our state desperately needs a budget that will support agency efforts to protect our air and water and address the history of social injustice that has compromised the health of vulnerable and frontline communities. In order to fulfill the state's responsibility to protect the trust of clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment for future generations, Oregon's 2023 budget must recognize provide appropriate investments.

While we recognize the tight budget situation confronting the state, those of us living in rural Oregon and, therefore, on the frontlines of so many threats to our environment and our health, urge the legislature to recognize the plight that we and other vulnerable communities face by supporting climate funding in the state budget.

Our review of the legislative proposals introduced during the 2023 session indicates that the proposals in need to funding (not listed in rank order) support are:

SB868-871 – the Resilient Buildings package,

SB530 The Natural Climate Solutions Bill,

HB2990 The Community Resilience Hubs Bill,

HB2998 The Healthy Soils Bill,

SB522 Enhancement of the role and capacity of the Oregon Global Warming (Climate Action) Commission while establishing improved goals for greenhouse gas emissions reduction,

HB3196 Establishing rules for and supporting the Climate Investment fund of the Climate Protection Program,

HB3056 Extending the heat pump fund,

HB3133 Promoting multi-modal transit,

HB3229 Relating to fee increases for climate pollution emissions,

HB2571 Establishing a rebate for electric bicycles,

If Oregon is genuinely to contribute its share to solving the climate crisis and assume a national leadership position in confronting this existential problem, while simultaneously reflecting

legislatively and budgetarily, the concerns of its residents, we must invest in efforts that achieve this goal. In terms of the ongoing viability of humanity and life on the planet as we know it, there can be no greater demand for our financial resources.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Journet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Alan Journet