

February 22, 2024

Oregon State Senate, 2024 Regular Session  
Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Public Hearing, HB4083

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. I live in La Grande, Oregon. I'm testifying as a private citizen. I'm also a member of the Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition. It's mission is to inform and to prepare local communities to adapt to climate change.

The Columbia River Basin is completely surrounded by mountains and subject to air inversions that cap the Basin for weeks at a time. A Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area report stated that:

*...inversions often settle below the surrounding rim providing an effective lid...*

Traveling from La Grande and dropping into Pendleton, we look down on a cloud bank stretching to Hood River trapping everything during inversions. That means bad air quality from power plant and industrial emissions. The cities, towns, rural communities, tribal lands, farmlands, commercial operations, and health of all residents are affected.

Boardman and Hermiston are at the center of those emissions. Four of Oregon's top five carbon emitters cluster around those towns, each spewing over a million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> a year. The area is home to a diverse population including 40% who are Hispanic. Many are long time home owners and proud citizens: farmhands; factory workers; shop keepers; truck drivers; small business owners; school teachers... professionals who keep the place running. Thousands with wells are at risk from thirty years of nitrates polluting the aquifer and all are subject to bad air quality for days on end. Economic justice is lacking in that environment: property values have dropped; peoples health has deteriorated; the water and the air are getting worse not better.

The Boardman coal fired plant was unregulated. Pollution including mercury, would often be drawn down into Hells Canyon. With little desire to add scrubbers, and no money for expensive carbon capture, the owner closed the plant. Coal collapsed in the U.S. They benefited by being forced to follow the rules. It's my hope that Oregon will follow suit and do its residents a big favor by reducing and eventually eliminating its stake in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Thank you for your time.

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