

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

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Confronting Climate Change

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Reference Amendments to HB4024

Chair Fahey and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

I write as cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now, an organization of some 2,000 Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and encourage state action to address it. As rural and coastal Southern Oregonians, we live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to produce. Because of this, we pay close attention to what is happening in Salem in terms of legislative proposals.

I write today to offer our vehement opposition to the attempt to gut and stuff the bland study bill HB4024 with a fraudulent campaign finance reform proposal designed to become a ballot measure that would compete with and undermine the real campaign finance reform proposal of IP 9.

Those of us following the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are very much aware that the IPCC argued several years ago (IPCC 2018) that it is necessary to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This has become sufficiently well accepted that it is generally assumed as the target (e.g., IPCC 2023). The industrial revolution is identified as having occurred in the mid – late 1700s through the early 1800s (Wilkinson 2023). By 2018, the IPCC indicated that global temperatures had reached 1°C above pre-industrial levels while IPCC (2023) identified warming as then reaching 1.1°C above the 1850-1900 immediate post-industrial revolution average. In fact, according to NASA (2024) last year the temperature anomaly over land was already above that critical value (NASA 2024) with every month from June onwards beating historic records.

Restricting warming to the targeted upper 1.5°C limit was argued by the IPCC (2018) to require our collectively achieving net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 where net zero is defined to exist when “...the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> entering the atmosphere must equal the amount that is removed. The simplest way to achieve this globally is for every jurisdiction to identify at least this as its individual goal and identify intermediate targets consistent with achieving that 2050 goal.

We understand that no single individual, city, county, state, or nation can reduce or eliminate emissions sufficient itself to achieve this net zero goal, but, if we wish to preserve civilization and life as we know it on the planet, we can all, and should all, do our share to reduce emissions. Regrettably, at all levels of government, many of those holding elective office seem not to appreciate, or at least act as though they fail to appreciate, the urgency of our plight. Either the lure of campaign contributions or the need to fulfill a commitment that generated such contributions seems to be a significant cause for this lack of

alarm and urgency. Those of us concerned about the climate crisis, like those concerned about many other critical societal issues, realize that our ability to stimulate meaningful legislative action is substantially hampered by the lax campaign finance laws of Oregon rendering us 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in campaign finance restrictions.

In an extensive discussion of money in politics, published in the University of Illinois (Chicago) John Marshall Law Review, Foreman (2018) concluded: “The structure of campaign finance in American politics has allowed wealthy individuals and large corporations to hijack what is supposed to be a democratic government.” On the way to that conclusion, he suggested: “The problem is not a handful of corrupt actors, but the system itself, which incentivizes politicians and parties to serve the interests of those that provide them funding” (Foreman, 2018).

Oregon’s failure to regulate campaign cash has made us one of the biggest money states in American politics. In a four-part *Oregonian* series on money in politics, Davis (2019) started by noting: “... in the last four years, Oregon’s most powerful industries have killed, weakened or stalled efforts to deal with climate change, wolf recovery, disappearing bird habitat, cancer-causing diesel exhaust, dwindling groundwater, industrial air pollution, oil spill planning and weed killers sprayed from helicopters.” He followed this with the statement: “Oregon’s failure to regulate campaign cash has made it one of the biggest money states in American politics. The flood of money created an easy regulatory climate where industry gets what it wants, again and again.” In a brief summary statement Davis (2019) noted: “No one has given more money to state lawmakers in Oregon than Corporate America. Companies and industry groups contributed \$43 million to winning candidates in elections from 2008 to 2016, nearly half the money legislators raised. Organized labor, single-issue groups and individual donors didn’t come close. It is time to return Oregon to the community of democratic states where public opinion and elections determine public policy rather than money. In 2015, the Center for Public Integrity (van der Voo, 2015) ranked Oregon 49<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states for Political Financing rules. The question is: has anything changed to improve that ranking?

It seems clear that Oregon needs real campaign finance reform, such as that contained in Initiative Petition 9 developed by Honest Elections, Oregon (Honest-Elections updated). What Oregon does **NOT** need is sham campaign finance reform of the kind proposed in the amendments to HB4024. It would be a delight if the sponsors of the amendments to HB4024 would simply replace their transparent attempt to greenwash a weak campaign finance reform proposal with a serious effort, such as IP9, and send that to the people for a vote. Those trying to hoodwink Oregonians will not soon be forgotten for this effort.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Journet". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan Journet Ph.D.

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