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SOCAN Comments supporting SB1588

Chair Sollman and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment:

I write as cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN), the oldest grassroots climate organization in the Rogue Valley, now representing some 2,000 Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and seek federal, state, and local action to address it. We are rural and coastal Southern Oregonians who live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought, rising sea level, and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to impose on us. Because of our concern, we pay close attention to efforts nationally, statewide, and locally that impact our collective efforts to address the climate crisis. As our logo above indicates, the focus of SOCAN is to promote action through science while encouraging that this be undertaken through a social justice lens.

We are aware that the climate projections for Oregon suggest a rise over the 1981-2014 value of some 10°F (Figure 1, USGS 2026). We also understand that the distribution of natural ecosystems across the planet is determined by annual precipitation (as an effective proxy for water availability) and Temperature (Figure 2, modified from Whittaker 1975). Comparing

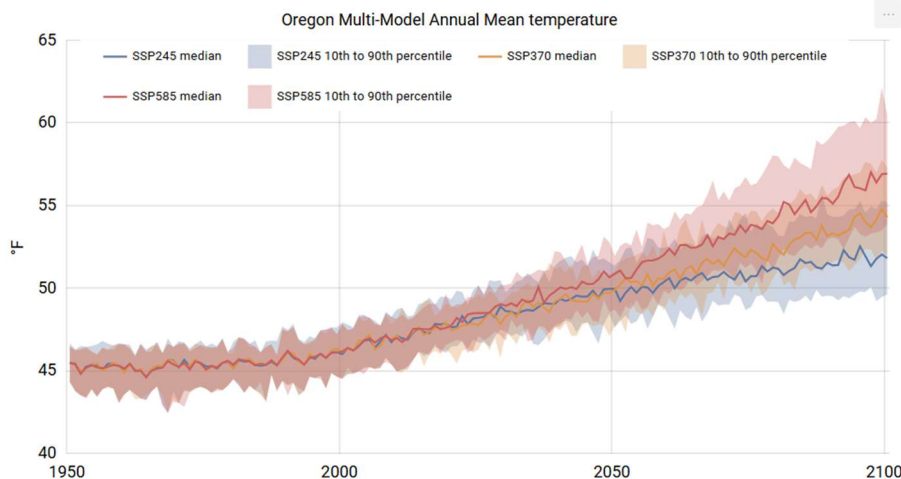


Figure 1. Temperature projection in Oregon to 2100, USGS 2026)

Figures 1 and 2 will reveal that Oregon's natural ecosystems will be threatened by the climate projections currently available.

It is critical to appreciate, also, that our agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are influenced by these same variables so will similarly be

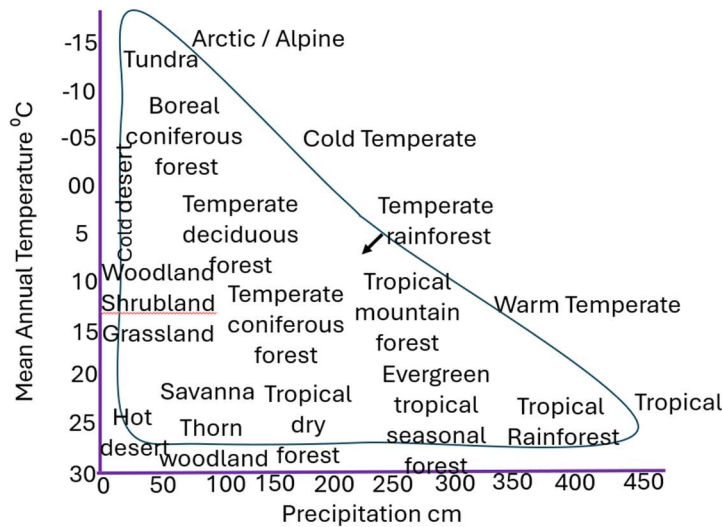


Figure 2. The distribution of global natural ecosystems in relation to mean annual temperature and precipitation (modified from Whittaker 1975).

compromised by the projected climate, and by the end of this century. It should be evident that addressing the climate crisis is critical and urgent. This means that we should do everything possible individually and collectively to reduce our contribution to the climate crisis by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

In Figure 1, the red line depicts the Shared Socioeconomic Pathway 585 (SSP585) which initially was defined as the 'worst case

scenario' but has frequently been dubbed the 'business as usual' scenario since we seem to be following it. The pink shading indicates the 10th to 90th percentiles for this line. Meanwhile, the orange line represents the SSP370 scenario with orange shading the 10th to 90th percentiles and the blue line indicates the SSP245 line with blue shading the 10th to 90th percentile range. The latter two lines represent scenarios in which we substantially reduce the aggressive trajectory of increasing fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions we are following.

When undertaking its greenhouse gas inventory of regulated greenhouse gas emissions, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality reveals that Residential and Commercial emissions account for approximately a third of the state's total, where it is second only to the Transportation sector (Figure 3, DEQ undated). It should be evident, also, that a goal for state policy should be to encourage emissions reductions in the residential/commercial arena. The amount of household income spent on energy is identified as the energy burden. Because energy burden is generally defined as occurring when the energy cost reaches 6% of a household's monthly income, an energy cost of \$160 per month would make a household energy burdened if the annual income were equal to or lower than \$32,200 (Shuff 2022).

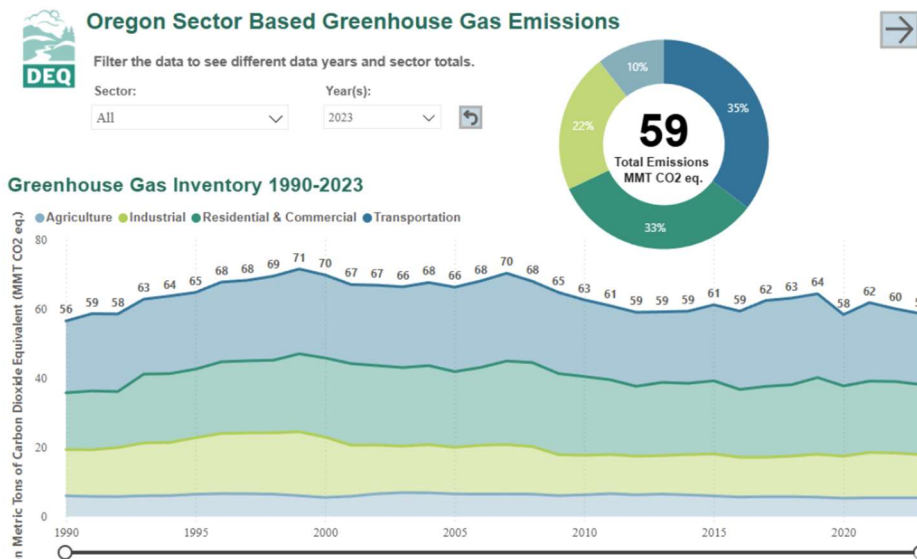


Figure 3. Oregon Department of Environmental Quality depiction of Oregon greenhouse gas emissions by sector (DEQ undated)

Regrettably, not everyone is able to afford the capital cost of weatherizing and increasing their energy use efficiency, even though taking such steps ultimately results in substantial cost savings and reduces the household energy burden. If

reducing residential emissions is, indeed, a state policy goal, one effective way to promote low- and mid-income energy upgrades is to encourage the utilities to invest in homeowner upgrade expenses and then recoup those costs by increasing the monthly utility charge accordingly to pay off the loan. Then, once the loan is paid off, the homeowner continues to benefit financially from the upgrade while the utility benefits from lower emissions allowing it better to achieve its emission reduction goals.

For this reason, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now strongly endorses SB1588 in its effort to promote such a program.

Respectfully Submitted

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