

June 11, 2020

Cathy Macdonald, Chair  
Oregon Global Warming Commission  
550 Capitol St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: Next steps for natural resource agencies' EO 20-04 implementation plans**

Dear Chair Macdonald:

We are writing in regards to Governor Kate Brown's Oregon Climate Action Plan (EO 20-04). Citing the impacts of climate change to Oregon's natural resources, economic vitality, and public health, the Oregon Climate Action Plan adopts new goals for Oregon to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 45% below 1990 by 2035, and by at least 80% by 2050, and directs the Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC), Oregon's natural resource agencies, and other state commissions and agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt climate mitigation measures.

As Oregon's primary commission responsible for recommending ways to coordinate state and local efforts to reduce Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions, the OGWC will be a critical player in implementing the executive order and ensuring that the state achieves its climate goals. In particular, we expect the OGWC to play a leadership role in coordinating the state natural resource agencies' efforts to advance carbon sequestration and climate mitigation on our natural and working lands.

The Oregon Climate Action Plan comes at a pivotal point in the global fight against climate change. As discussed at length in the OGWC's 2018 biennial report, climate harms are already impacting the wellbeing of Oregonians across the state:<sup>1</sup> Dangerous wildfires are increasing in frequency and scale, endangering public health and safety, hurting rural economies and costing millions in taxpayer dollars each year.<sup>2</sup> Drought affects agricultural production, reducing crop yields, affecting livestock health and hurting farmers' bottom lines.<sup>3</sup> Warmer waters imperil salmon runs and other aquatic species, threatening Oregon fisheries and the economies that depend on them for survival. Warming waters also threaten public health, drinking water and recreation, by encouraging toxic algae blooms to develop in reservoirs, lakes and rivers.

Scientific consensus tells us that these same natural resources that are threatened by climate change have a critical role to play in avoiding climate catastrophe. From how we grow our food to how we manage our forests, the way we use our land has the potential to seal our climate fate. Recognizing the vital role that

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<sup>1</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c554e0f09ca40655ea6eb0/t/5c2e415d0ebbe8aa6284fdef/1546535266189/2018-OGWC-Biennial-Report.pdf#page=14>

<sup>2</sup> The Oregon Department of Forestry has already reported nearly three times as many fires as is normal this year, well before the official start of fire season. <https://www.kdrv.com/content/news/Oregon-reports-almost-three-times-as-many-fires-than-normal-so-far-in-2020-570018191.html?fbclid=IwAR3V3AR7X2IW4-X-ZT-FjSpFRU8bGeoBaY-ZwK5tLsFlx4f1wUw5DqlQruk>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ocri.net/publications-and-reports/third-oregon-climate-assessment-report-2017/>

natural and working lands play in carbon sequestration and climate mitigation,<sup>4</sup> the Oregon Climate Action Plan includes the state's natural resource agencies in its directives to advance the state's climate emission reduction and mitigation goals. It also specifically charges the OGWC with working with the state natural resource agencies--the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Department of Forestry, and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board--to produce a proposal for carbon sequestration and storage by Oregon's natural and working landscapes.

Given these directives and the OGWC's broad expertise in carbon sequestration and accounting, we expect the OGWC to not only adopt its own emission reduction and climate mitigation policies, but also to support other agencies charged with doing so. Any proposed policies to achieve the state's carbon sequestration and emission reduction goals must be ambitious and clearly defined, and must maximize the value of our natural and working landscapes. The OGWC will be essential to informing and ensuring the strongest possible climate policy outcomes in this space.

In particular, we expect the OGWC to provide critical review and constructive recommendations on the natural resource agencies' proposed plans for implementing the executive order's directives. Where necessary for achieving climate goals, we expect the OGWC to compel the agencies to improve their plans. As part of this work, we urge the OGWC to complete the following actions:

1. Establish a structure for Oregonians across the state to provide input on the natural resource agencies' preliminary reports and proposed actions moving forward. This public engagement process should be transparent, and enable input and engagement from Oregonians representing a broad and diverse demographic.
2. Determine a timeline and process for public comments to be reviewed, synthesized, and communicated to the Governor's office and to state natural resource agencies for incorporation into revised and updated final reports.
3. Develop a timeline, a communications strategy, and opportunities for public comment on OGWC's proposed plan for carbon sequestration and storage by Oregon's natural and working landscapes, required to be submitted to the Governor by June 30, 2021.
4. Develop robust monitoring and oversight criteria to ensure that the state and relevant agencies achieve the goals for carbon sequestration and storage by Oregon's natural and working landscapes, as detailed in the proposal submitted to the Governor.
5. Propose sustained roles and a framework for the OGWC, Governor's office, natural resource agency boards, the Oregon State Legislature, and public-at-large to assist in the implementation and monitoring of the final proposal for the duration of the executive order.

Our organizations look forward to collaborating with you on these efforts and learning more about the OGWC's plans to implement the executive order's directives.

Sincerely,

350 Salem Oregon

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccel/>

*Letter to Oregon Global Warming Commission re: EO 20-04 implementation*

350.org Washington County  
350 Deschutes  
350PDX  
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon  
Bark  
Beyond Toxics  
Bill Bradbury, Former Oregon Secretary of State  
Breach Collective  
Cascadia Wildlands  
Clackamas Climate Action Coalition  
Center for Sustainable Economy  
Clackamas Climate Action Coalition  
Climate conversations  
Climate Solutions  
Community for Earth, First Unitarian Church of Portland  
Douglas County Global Warming Coalition  
Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon  
Eugene/ Springfield NAACP  
Fellowship Of Reconciliation  
Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE)  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Cascade-Volcanoes Band  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
Native Fish Society  
North Plains Grassroots  
OLCV MCAT  
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network  
Oregon Environmental Council  
Oregon League of Conservation Voters  
Oregon Public Health Association  
Oregon Wild  
Our Climate  
Pacific Forest Trust  
Renew Oregon  
Residential Energy & Water Intelligence (Res-Intel)  
Rural Oregon Climate Political Action Committee (ROCPAC)  
SERA Architects  
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN)  
Sunrise Eugene  
Sustainable Northwest  
Tuck Wilson, Climate conversations  
Umpqua Watersheds

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University of Oregon Climate Justice League  
Williams Community Forest Project