



COAST RANGE
ASSOCIATION

July 22, 2020

Oregon Global Warming Coalition
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Dear Oregon Global Warming Commission,

The Coast Range Association is submitting this public comment to urge the Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC) to act quickly and offer solutions at the scale of the climate emergency. We urge a robust implementation of Executive Order (EO) 20-04 addressing carbon storage and sequestration on Oregon's natural and working lands. Scientists have been highlighting the need for immediate action on climate change for decades. "Yet greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are still rapidly rising, with increasingly damaging effects on the Earth's climate. An immense increase of scale in endeavors to conserve our biosphere is needed to avoid untold suffering due to the climate crisis (IPCC 2018)." ([Ripple, et al.](#))

Today, children protest weekly and understand the dire consequences of climate inaction, but leaders continue to delay action at the scale of the emergency we face. "In order to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees, the upcoming months and years are crucial. The clock is ticking. Doing your best is no longer good enough. You must now do the seemingly impossible." ([Thunberg, et al. July 2020](#)) It is time the OGWC act courageously to protect the future of all Oregonians and our landscapes. It is up to the OGWC to understand the opportunities and work towards a just transition for Oregon's natural and working lands.

Utilizing natural climate solutions that optimize carbon sequestration on all of Oregon's forestlands has significant potential to limit forest sector emissions and become the state's best carbon storehouse. Oregon's timber sector is the largest contributor to the state's GHG emissions. Old and diverse forests store more carbon than small tree plantations ([Law, et al. 2017](#)). The OGWC must offer bold proposals to build up carbon on public, and more

importantly, private forestland. The OGWC must use its authority to ensure Oregon's land-use agencies collaborate to create natural and working lands carbon sequestration solutions that are grounded in the best available science while providing for the social needs of vulnerable and frontline communities. Below we provide examples of solutions and areas of continued investigation that we recommend the OGWC include in the Implementation Plan for Natural and Working Lands.

Natural and Working Lands Solutions

1. End the jobs versus environment debate. As the recent [Oregonian/OPB/ProPublica](#) article on tax-breaks for large timber corporations shows, working people and forests are being exploited for the increasing wealth of corporate forest owners. Entities like timber investment management agencies (TIMO) and real estate investment trusts (REIT) have a legal responsibility to maximize profit for their shareholders, not to store carbon or invest in communities. This model is incompatible with a just transition to a carbon free world. The nature of financially driven corporate forest ownership ensures that other forest benefits (local value-added enterprise, carbon storage, jobs, water quality, and habitat) cannot be realized during a carbon transition.
2. Adequate forest climate solutions must be understood as part of a national comprehensive industrial policy. The state's budget cannot limit your vision or solutions. Oregon should be coordinating with national, federally led industrial climate directed policies. OGWC should anticipate broad policies such as a potential federal industrial investment in building materials and a fiber transition augmenting wood fiber. The OGWC must assess national proposals, such as HR-109 – the Green New Deal, and be prepared to submit proposals for Oregon's natural and working lands.
3. Reimagine forest ownership. We know that Oregon's corporate forest owners cannot both maximize profit and adequately store carbon. Through federal investments in natural and working lands the OGWC must craft plans that transition away from private corporate owned forests and agricultural lands toward municipal, cooperative and public ownership models that prioritize carbon storage, worker's needs and rural vitality. A transition in land ownership and management need not reinvent the wheel. Numerous cooperative, community based and worker owned enterprise models flourish within each community. Nationally and internationally the new ownership and public purpose strategy for a just economic transition is often referred to as a solidarity economy.
4. Oregon's land-management agencies must utilize peer-reviewed science and identify concrete steps for minimizing GHG emissions from natural and working lands, storing more carbon on the landscape, and engaging Oregon's congressional delegation in a carbon transition for US industrial sectors.
5. All OGWC plans and proposed actions must include analysis on how to benefit frontline and vulnerable communities. The deindustrialized rural landscape of Oregon has for too long been neglected in public policy and on-the-ground reform. With any new climate proposals, environmental justice must be included to increase the well-being of the most impacted communities across Oregon. Investing in communities is a win-win for building support for and implementing climate solutions on Oregon's natural and working lands.

The state and OGWC can no longer delay. The State of Oregon must act immediately at the scale demanded by the climate emergency. Proposed solutions must be comprehensive and intersectional. We hope the OGWC leads with proposals and strategies to ensure a just transition to a carbon free economy. Time is short. The carbon budget is rapidly running out. Your work will make it possible for Oregon to be a land where children have a healthy future.

Sincerely,

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

Chuck Willer
Executive Director
Coast Range Association

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