



March 1, 2017

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bills 557 and 748

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

We write in support of SB 557 and SB 748 as comprehensive approaches to mitigate climate change by putting a price on pollution. Both bills have the power to simultaneously decrease demand for fossil fuels and spur an economy-wide transition to clean energy.

Our Climate is a millennial-led organization that mobilizes and empowers the generations most affected by climate change to pass equitable, science-based policy. We aim to hold polluters accountable for climate change by putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions, and we train and organize young leaders in several states and on the federal level to advance this goal.

Our Climate started right here in Oregon in 2013, as a small but mighty grassroots group called Oregon Climate. In 2015, we asked for bold state leadership on climate and introduced several bills to price carbon. Our volunteers were disappointed when the legislature did not pass legislation to hold polluters accountable, and indeed felt forgotten by those we elect to protect our future. We are optimistic that 2017 will be the year Oregon demonstrates real leadership and passes comprehensive legislation.

Given the lack of federal action on climate, it is imperative that states lead the way. Oregon is one of five states considering carbon pricing legislation in 2017. As the legislature considers the bills before this committee, we ask that the following policy principles remain front and center.

- **Be strong and grow over time.** To reach emissions reduction goals set by best available climate science, the price per ton of carbon pollution should be high enough to shift

economic activity away from fossil fuels. The price must rise predictably over time to efficiently incentivize ongoing behavioral change by consumers, investors, and businesses.

- **Cast a wide net.** All greenhouse gasses that can be measured should be priced, not just carbon dioxide. All economic sectors should be subject to the price in order to accelerate the transition to clean energy and avoid market distortion. Pricing policy should avoid offsets and grandfathering to ensure comprehensive reductions.
- **Be just and equitable.** Simply increasing the price of energy can be regressive. Carbon pricing policy should incorporate measures to refund protect those people most vulnerable to short-term rising fossil fuel prices, including low- and middle-income households and workers transitioning from heavily fossil-fuel-dependent industries, when and where appropriate. In Oregon, revenue should directly benefit low income persons and communities that are disproportionately affected by pollution and climate change, including coastal, rural, and communities of color.
- **Be politically durable.** Carbon pricing revenue should not be used to fund long-term programs, which could lead to powerful political disincentives to eliminate fossil fuel consumption. .

Unlike politics, science has predictable, physical limits. The consequences of exceeding those limits are tangible. Oceans will continue to rise and acidify and negatively affect coastal fisheries. Storms will intensify and ruin our homes and infrastructure. Droughts and floods already impact our food and water supply. We do not have the luxury to wait.

Young people are not going to turn away from this issue, and we will not forget the inaction of our elected officials. As the rising electorate, the decisions made by this committee will directly affect our lives in concrete ways. They will affect our incomes and financial security: a recent report from Demos and NextGen Climate found that without action on climate change, a 21-year old college graduate will lose \$100,000 in lifetime income, and \$142,000 in wealth.¹ They will affect our decision whether or not to have children.

Our Climate strongly supports SB 557 and SB 748 and urges this committee to do everything in your power to spearhead the passage of one of these two bills this legislative session. Our future depends on your leadership.

¹ <http://www.demos.org/publication/price-tag-being-young-climate-change-and-millennials-economic-future>

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cassidy Jones
Program Coordinator
Our Climate