

FOR CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION, OREGONIANS MUST EMBRACE INNOVATION OVER OBSTRUCTION

Op Ed by
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At the beginning of this year, Oregon set out on an extraordinary path that, if executed with care, transparency, and determination, will put our state and economy on a path to improved prosperity, human and environmental health, and energy security.

The state's new Climate Protection Program took effect on Jan. 1. It sets a schedule and targets for our state's necessary transition off of fossil fuels to a clean energy economy over the next three decades.

Unfortunately, news recently broke of a legal challenge by some of Oregon's largest fossil fuel interests to roll back this common-sense program. While not entirely surprising, it is an unfortunate attempt to roll back the direction of forward-thinking businesses who understand the urgent need to embrace a clean energy future.

The Department of Environmental Quality shaped the Climate Protection Program with input from a large, diverse Rulemaking Advisory Committee through a transparent, robust, 18-month process. As director of Oregon Business for Climate, I participated as a member of the RAC and saw first-hand the overwhelming support of Oregonians for the program. The result is a smart, flexible Climate Protection Program.

Rather than mandating how to reach progressively lower pollution year over year, the program leaves room for innovation. It also spurs targeted community investments to help with the transition.

Hundreds of Oregon businesses, like the members of Oregon Business for Climate, with tens of thousands of employees, see the imperative – and the opportunity – of aggressive climate action. And we understand that every jurisdiction must take responsibility for its share of global emissions.

THE PROGRAM LEAVES ROOM FOR INNOVATION. IT ALSO SPURS TARGETED COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS TO HELP WITH THE TRANSITION.

PROGRESS AT RISK

Of course some businesses face legitimate challenges as they plan, invest, and adapt for success in a clean energy economy. The Climate Protection Plan provides a clear framework for that planning.

The legal challenges from the oil and gas industry puts more than our progress at risk. They threaten our economy. Clean energy and energy efficiency save money – for families and businesses. Those dollars circulate right here in Oregon. And unlike oil and gas, renewable energy produced at home is not affected by actions half a world away, as we're seeing right now in Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Oregonians facing worsening fires, smoke, heat and drought know the real cost is the cost of inaction. Those costs are multiplied when considering the local health and other effects of fossil-fueled energy, especially in our most vulnerable communities. The extensive testimony and studies reviewed in the process of forming the CPP quantified the overwhelming economic benefits of moving forward with the program.

Savvy Oregon businesses plan for their operating and regulatory environment, and want clarity wherever possible. They see that climate change is a huge piece of that context.



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YES, IT'S AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE.

Yes, it's an unprecedented challenge. But denial is not a sound business strategy. With strong climate action, spurred by programs like the CPP and other investments, Oregon has the chance to help lead the way to a clean economy. This sparks innovation in products, services, and business practices in industries across the state, bringing leadership and competitive advantages to expanded markets everywhere.



That creates good jobs in our communities, along with energy cost savings, health benefits and cleaner air and water.

Change is coming. The question is whether we'll let change happen to us, or face the challenge with a plan. Will we look to delay and defer out of parochial interests, or look forward and play an active role in managing through it? Proactive solutions to climate change are both an imperative for our communities, and a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our economy.

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CLIMATE CHAMPION. BUSINESS INNOVATOR.

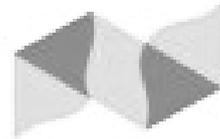
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