

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

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Confronting Climate Change

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**Responses to The Main Medford Hearing Opposition  
Talking Points**

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During the Medford Hearing, HB2020 opponents kept largely on message hammering the following few misinformed positions:

HB2020 is punitive (against Oregonians) and representatives need to exert their fiduciary responsibility to protect Oregonians from tax increases for the following reasons:

- 1) Oregon is already a leader in renewable energy, green jobs, low carbon emissions. HB2020 is all pain and no gain. It will cost families more for gas, utilities, and food and won't make a difference in global climate change.
- 2) Price of fuel will rise at least 16 cents per gallon (according to AAA). Food utilities, and gas prices will cost \$1500 per family.
- 3) HB2020 would penalize companies that make or grow things, because of higher energy and operating costs reducing blue collar jobs especially in rural Oregon.
- 4) Would raise \$550 million in new revenue with no accountability for how lawmakers and government employees spend the money. HB2020 is not about the environment, it's about the money.
- 5) OCCRI Director Phil Mote (not identified by name, but I recall the occasion) said Oregon's emissions reductions would not reduce global warming.
- 6) Southern Oregon will lose jobs

The result was that witness after witness whined about the 'punitive bill' and the need for committee members to obey their oath of office and uphold their 'fiduciary responsibility' to Oregonians.

The key responses are:

- 1- In 2007 Oregon established a purely voluntary program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with a goal of 75% below 1990 level by 2050. However, this was purely voluntary and we are far from a trajectory in emissions reductions that would achieve that goal. In fact, if we follow our current behavior - even with all the program currently in place - we are expected to be over 4 times greater in emissions than the 2007 program identified. Much as we all would like voluntary goals to be effective, the proof of their failure is in the data. If we are serious about placing Oregon on a path to emissions reductions, we need a more effective program.
- 2- When California's Cap and Trade came into full effect (in 2012) gasoline prices fell. This demonstrates that fuel prices are under a wide array of price influences and an emissions cap is not the critical factor.

[https://www.energy.ca.gov/almanac/transportation\\_data/gasoline/retail\\_gasoline\\_prices2.html](https://www.energy.ca.gov/almanac/transportation_data/gasoline/retail_gasoline_prices2.html)

- 3- Electricity prices in the nine eastern Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) states has fallen 6% since their cap and trad was imposed while prices have risen 6% form other states - so the net price benefit is 12% [http://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Acadia-Center\\_RGGI-Report\\_Outpacing-the-Nation.pdf](http://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Acadia-Center_RGGI-Report_Outpacing-the-Nation.pdf)
- 3) The GDP of California (both overall and per capita) has risen while GHG emissions have fallen, ([https://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables/tracking\\_progress/documents/Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions.pdf](https://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables/tracking_progress/documents/Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Reductions.pdf))  
Economic growth in RGGI states rose 29.7% from 2008 - 2016 even as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions fell 33%. During the same period the rest of the country experienced 25.4% economic growth and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions of 18%. The cap and trade states were 4.3% ahead on economic growth and 15% ahead of emissions reductions. [http://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Acadia-Center\\_RGGI-Report\\_Outpacing-the-Nation.pdf](http://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Acadia-Center_RGGI-Report_Outpacing-the-Nation.pdf)
- 4) Every element in HB2020 that deals with the expenditure of revenues demands that these contribute to the goals of the Climate Action Program of reducing emissions or capturing and storing greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere. The program and its administration would be supervised by a committee of House and Senate legislators so it would be accountable to our elected representatives.
- 5) Even though Oregon's emissions are small and we know collective global action is needed, if we wish our state to be protected, we will need to urge other states and nations to lower their emissions. If we are not lowering our state emissions, we will have no credibility or moral authority to urge others to act.  
Analogy 1: Suppose I argue that my state or federal taxes are such a small proportion of state or federal income that I shouldn't have to pay. Ask: would this be acceptable as a defense in court?  
Analogy 2: Should I be allowed to release just a few carcinogenic chemicals into the local reservoir or nearby stream? How many emitters of 'just a few carcinogens' are acceptable? Would this be an acceptable polluters defense?  
If we do not address our emissions, we have no credibility or moral authority to ask anyone else (state or nation) to lower theirs and protect our state from global warming. Only if we do it ourselves, do we have any ability to urge others to take the necessary steps to reduce theirs.
- 6) The Investment components of HB2020 is designed precisely to stimulate green jobs. The state Department of Environmental Quality has estimated the revenue raised from HB2020 in its first year of operation will be some \$550 million, of which \$348 million will be from transportation fuel and thus constitutionally earmarked for highway projects that serve the purposes of the Climate Action Program (many of which will be in construction). Most of the remaining \$202 million will be targeted for the Climate Investment Fund which will promote projects that generate employment in: clean energy; regenerative agriculture and forestry that captures and stores greenhouse gases from the atmosphere; communities (such as rural Southern Oregon) that are impacted by climate change or the transition to a clean energy economy, projects that stimulate our adaptation to climate change; forestry management that reduces the risk to the region from wildfires.  
In fact Senate District 3 already has 1,500 clean energy jobs, \$9 million of private investment,

and 3.1 megawatts of generation capacity, so with HB2020 we can build on this foundation and keep our energy dollars circulating in Southern Oregon instead of leaving the state.

The special interests who favor the status quo of accelerating fossil fuel use, accelerating greenhouse gas emissions, and accelerating global warming have successfully spread their campaign of disinformation and fear-mongering. This has persuaded concerned Oregonians who have not read the proposal and do not know what has happened in other states with cap and trade to believe that their very livelihoods and lives are in jeopardy.