

 **SHARE**

In the last decade or so, Oregon has endured destructive wildfires, reductions in snowpack, and declining fisheries. First responder and resident Oregonian communities alike still vividly recall the devastation brought by the 2003 B&B Complex wildfire. Although the Beaver State had a good 2018 ski season, snowpack this winter is more than one-quarter down from what has in the past been considered 'normal'. Ocean acidification is killing oyster and plankton in farms along the Oregon coast.

Oregon, along with other states in the Pacific Northwest, has enjoyed bountiful resources like clean air, water, and forests that enable lifestyles built around outdoor recreation like camping, skiing, and hunting, economies of natural resource extraction like logging, fishing, and farming, as well as the rich cultural tapestry of Northwest tribes, including Wasco, Paiute, Umatilla, Athabascans, Chinook, and numerous other indigenous peoples. UCS published a fact sheet, *Confronting Climate Change in Oregon*, that demonstrates the climate impacts, future risks, and costs associated with climate change in the state, and also highlights the actions needed to reduce emissions of global warming pollution.

Oregon's current climate impacts and future risks

With the Pacific Northwest having warmed at least 1.5°F since the first half of the 20th century, climate change is already being felt in the Beaver State. This warming has led to reductions in snow—some of it fell as rain instead—which means less snowpack. Reductions in snowpack have increased wildfire risks and accelerated the pace of snowmelt, increasing flood risks. Adding to the web of complex ecological interactions are the human health, infrastructure, and economic impacts from changes in the climate. Rates of infectious disease and heat-related illnesses, as well as requests for emergency food assistance are on the rise. Less snow due to higher temperatures means less winter tourism dollars; hops and barley production for beer-making are affected by changes in temperatures, drought, and water. Less plankton means less food for Oregon's delicious salmon, mackerel, and trout. The smoke and damage from the 2017 wildfires affected tourism in the Columbia River Gorge, Three Sisters, and Mount Jefferson areas, causing unhealthy air quality for about 160 days for sensitive groups, sparking a rise in emergency room visits, canceling major events and closing Interstate 84, and causing job losses. But there are many other things at risk that can't be measured in lost dollars. For the Columbia River tribes, for example, salmon is an integral part of their culture – it is not just a utilitarian resource of protein and wealth. It is also closely tied to their identity as a people and is an indicator of their own cultural and physical health. It is fascinating to consider how Salmon (yes- with a capital "S") takes on a human-like existence of his own, has his own agency in First Nation cultures, and can teach all of us a lot about responsible, sustainable, and ethical use of natural resources.

As the climate decade looms over us, Oregon needs to step up to drastically reduce heat-trapping emissions

In confronting climate threats to the livelihoods and wellbeing of Oregonians, the state has taken action to combat heat-trapping emissions. In 2007, Oregon enacted a renewable portfolio standard (RPS), followed by ambitious legislative bills: one on clean fuels and another to transition from coal to clean energy. And the state has set goals of reducing heat-

trapping emissions to 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and to at least 75 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. But although the RPS succeeded in meeting the 2010 emissions reductions goals, the state is not on track to meet its goals for the decades leading up to the mid-century. Advocates in Oregon are heeding the scientific international community's warning that the 2030s—the "climate decade"—is our last chance to make drastic emissions reductions if we are to avoid catastrophic impacts and that Oregon should adopt goals for 2035.

Oregon's latest move to strengthen its ongoing commitment to reduce emissions is to pass strong climate legislation in the 2019 legislative session, such as the Clean Energy Jobs (CEJ) bill, which is supported by a broad coalition of clean energy and climate advocates, including UCS. In broad terms, the key elements of strong climate legislation and a CEJ bill include:

- Placing a declining cap and price on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from covered entities.
- Ensuring that polluters pay the bulk of the costs of allowances, and that low-income consumers are not adversely impacted.
- Using a market-based approach that ensures the lowest societal cost for achieving the required greenhouse gas emissions reductions, drives the market for energy efficiency, and levels the playing field for clean energy.
- Funding climate solutions and a transition to a clean energy economy that improves livelihoods in underserved communities, including communities of color, tribal communities, and rural and low-income communities.

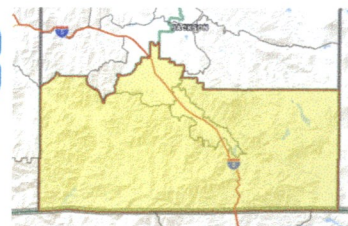
But polluters are lobbying hard to "kick down the can" the CEJ bill's commitment to drastic emissions reductions all the way to 2050—that's 30 years from now that Oregonians and the planet don't have in order to avoid catastrophic impacts. In addition to the 2050 target, advocates are also pushing for an interim reduction target in 2035 for inclusion in the draft CEJ bill. The Sightline Institute's analysis is clear on how important an interim target is: *"Failing to meet the 2035 goal means a lot more unnecessary pollution. In total, [eliminating the interim target] allows for an extra 106.7 MMT of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions by 2050. This is equivalent to losing out on a more than decade of pollution reductions."*

Oregon lawmakers did not pass the Clean Energy Jobs bill in 2018 but it's important to act in 2019. Governor Kate Brown, Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek are all committed to passing a climate bill, so prospects for the bill are good. But we need to ensure that they confront the reality of climate change in Oregon and work to pass a bill focused on advancing effective, science-based solutions for clean energy, transportation, and investments in our communities.



SENATE DISTRICT 3

Senator Jeff Golden



Good for the Economy.
Good for the Environment.

Oregon's Clean Energy Policies Drive Economic Growth

District 3 Benefits:



1,559 Clean Energy Jobs*



\$9 million Private Investment
in solar and wind energy projects



3.1 MW Generation Capacity
from installed solar and wind energy

**STATE-
WIDE
BENEFITS**

55,179
total clean
energy jobs

\$6.7 billion
solar & wind energy
project investments

3,230 MW
solar & wind
energy capacity

\$258 million public revenue from renewable
energy projects

*Includes jobs in the renewable energy, energy efficiency, grid/storage, and clean vehicles industries

SOURCES

Jobs: 2018 U.S. Energy Employment Report, www.usaenergyjobs.org, data current through 2017;
Private Investment & Capacity: Kevala, www.cleanenergyprogress.com, data current through 2016;
Public Revenue: Renewable Northwest Oregon Factsheet, www.renewablenw.org, data current as of the 2016-17 tax year

Created November 2018