

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

SOCAN

Confronting Climate Change

<https://socan.eco>

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Colleagues:

I write as cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now, an organization of 1500 rural Southern Oregonians who are committed to promoting action that will address the climate crisis. We are well aware that transportation is the leading source of regulated greenhouse gas emissions in the state of Oregon. I, therefore, write in connection with the proposed Clean Trucks Rule 2021.

The transportation industry is among the most serious scofflaws in the arena of pushing back against any rational effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It appears that the industry is composed of and endless supply of climate science deniers who are committed to destroying life on the planet as we know it by pushing global temperatures beyond the tipping point of no return, all in the interests of their profit margin.

We face a crisis. It is time for all sectors of the economy to acknowledge that they have a responsibility to reduce emissions. Time and time again, vehicle manufacturers have claimed they cannot increase gas mileage, only to find ways to do it once regulations are imposed. We know from experience in Oregon that voluntary measures simply do not work: in 2002 HB3543 passed the legislature and was signed into law by the Governor. This established a downward trajectory in statewide greenhouse gas emissions that would have reached 75% below 1990 emissions by 2050. Regrettably, it was voluntary! Oregon's business community have largely simply and consistently refused to engage in any meaningful effort to reduce emissions. Indeed, every time legislation has been proposed that would require emissions reductions, the business organizations have opposed it by concocting all manner of totally false claims about the impact of proposed legislation. Now, following two years of walk-outs by the Republican Party to thwart meaningful legislative action, the Governor has established an Executive Order to require state agencies to reduce emissions substantially. Once again, the same cast of science denying spokespersons from the business industry rise up in opposition in a concerted effort to destroy life on the planet for our children and grandchildren, and their children and grandchildren. It is time for the people of the state, and our representatives, to stand up against this onslaught; we must reverse course on climate pollution.

One way to do this is to clean up the transportation sector by adopting “by reference California’s Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) Rule and Heavy-Duty Engine and Vehicle Omnibus rules (HD Omnibus).” (<https://www.oregon.gov/deg/Regulations/rulemaking/RuleDocuments/ctr2021pnp.pdf>)

We are long past the point when we should resist measures that will clean up the offending sectors of our economy. Our children and grand-children are sending us a plea to do what we need to do. On behalf of rural Oregonians who care about the future of life on the planet that our children and grand-children will endure, we urge adoption of this rule.

As an ecologist, retired from 30 years of teaching at Southeast Missouri State University, I am alarmed at the evidence. The latest (2021) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report provided data indicating that in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C (2.7°F) above the 1850-1900 average, we need to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030. My ecological background tells me that if we cross this temperature threshold, we are likely to destroy the natural ecosystems that support life, along with our agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. To those who argue that we cannot afford to adjust our behavior to address this crisis, I ask: “how much money will it take to buy food and fiber when our agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are destroyed.” There is no doubt that the cost of inaction would be far greater than the cost of action. We are long beyond the point when it is acceptable to argue that this or that activity should be exempt from taking necessary action to reduce emissions. We are at a time when everyone should simply be seeking ways to take action. This rule would force upon a recalcitrant sector of the economy the requirement that it stop evading and do its part to reduce emissions.

To those who argue that Oregon’s contribution to the problem is so small as to be inconsequential I note that, unless we reduce our emissions, we will have no moral authority or credibility to ask other states or nations to reduce theirs. The claim that Oregon’s emissions are so small that we should be excused from action is immoral and unethical. Those mouthing it should be ashamed of what they are suggesting future generations should suffer.

On behalf of the rural climate concerned residents Southern Oregon Climate Action Now, I wholeheartedly offer my support for the proposed action.

Respectfully submitted

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

Alan Journet Ph.D.

Cofacilitator
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

