

## **Oregon Business and Industry Sues to Undermine Climate Action**

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Oregonians should know and hold accountable those who joined the campaign to undermine the viability of our planet for future generations.

If global warming and its climate change consequences continue unchecked, they are likely to destroy our natural ecosystem (forests, woodlands, grasslands, deserts, etc.) by the end of the century, along with our agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. It's difficult to imagine how the economic impact of this could be overestimated or ignored.

Meanwhile, among those concerned about the economic impact of the climate crisis, none is more engaged than the insurance industry. Swiss Re, possibly the largest global reinsurance company, has assessed the potential economic cost of climate change. They estimated that warming of just 3.2° Centigrade above pre-industrial conditions would globally cost over 18% of Gross Domestic Product (meaning over \$15 trillion in current terms). Oregon's share would be some \$48 billion. Meanwhile, the global cost of keeping warming to 1.5°C would be about \$1.8 trillion, less than 12% of the cost of inaction that would allow warming to continue unabated. Unfortunately, the Business As Usual global temperature is expected to warm over 4°C, much worse than the Swiss Re modeling.

For years, climate activists have supported the Oregon legislative efforts to establish programs that would curtail greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon and contribute our share to addressing the climate crisis. These efforts have consistently been thwarted by Republican resistance, notably by their walking out of the chambers and the state to prevent bills from being enacted. They have justified this action with distortions about the economic consequences of the proposals. These distortions have been echoed by others who irrationally think the outcome of a continued climate crisis is less damaging and costly than addressing it.

Following the 2020 Republican walk-out, Governor Brown signed Executive Order 20-04 charging state agencies with developing programs to establish reasonable emissions reduction and carbon dioxide sequestration trajectories. Notable among the agency efforts was that of the Department of Environmental Quality. In order to assure those potentially affected by a climate plan would have input, DEQ established a Rulemaking Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the major stakeholders including many members of the affected industries. Over many months, DEQ sought input from this committee as it developed its Climate Protection Plan (CPP). Throughout

discussions, industry representatives claimed to be concerned about the climate crisis and contributed input to the developing plan that would address it.

The program developed by DEQ was approved by the Environmental Quality Commission. While the goals and trajectory were not as rigorous as many of us would like, at least the CPP places the state on a trajectory of meaningful emissions reductions.

Now, many participating businesses have filed lawsuits to overturn the CPP. They generated our need for rigorous action by declining to reduce their emissions when the 2007 voluntary emissions reduction program was signed into law and served on the RAC. Now they sue to terminate life on the planet as we know it.

Leading the charge, of course, is the trade association, Oregon Business and Industry. Joining that perpetual opponent of climate and environmental protection are: Oregon Farm Bureau; Oregon Manufacturers & Commerce; Alliance of Western Energy Consumers; Associated Oregon Loggers; Northwest Pulp & Paper Association; Oregon Association of Nurseries; Oregon Forest & Industries Council; Oregon Trucking Associations; and Western Wood Preservers Institute. They're joined by two private businesses, Otley Land & Cattle and Space Age Fuel.

It is absolutely no surprise that legal action includes NW Natural, Avista, and Cascade Gas since gas companies have consistently promoted the lie that theirs is 'the clean fossil fuel.' Neither are we surprised that deceitful Big Oil is joining the campaign through the Western States Petroleum Association - representing the largest polluters in the world, including Shell, Exxon, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips among other out-of-state oil companies.

While these industry representatives collaborate to undermine climate action, some business organizations recognize the problem and have not joined the suit: Oregon Businesses for Climate, the Main Street Alliance of Oregon, and Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility are notable among these.

Oregonian consumers deserve to know which companies are committed to the end of life on the planet as we know it.