

Date: January 8, 2007

To: Governor Ted Kulongoski

From: Mark Abbott and Ned Dempsey, Co-Chairs of the Climate Change Integration Group

RE: Interim Report from the Climate Change Integration Group

Oregon, as with every other state and nation, is on the precipice of a major crisis as a result of fundamental changes in our planet's environment. Impacts such as reduced mountain snow pack, rising sea levels and warming temperatures will grow in magnitude. Because steps taken today to address climate change will take many years to reach full effect, Oregon must act now to reduce its contribution to the problem by reducing locally generated greenhouse gases. The state must also begin now to prepare for the impacts of climate change that cannot be prevented. Finally, efforts must begin immediately to help local industries capture some of the projected \$500 billion global market that will emerge in low carbon goods and services in response to the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This document proposes a suite of initial actions aimed at helping the state prepare for the coming climate change crisis.

Over the next 50 years, levels of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere will likely exceed those experienced on the planet over the last several million years. Most of this increase will result from the burning of fossil fuels (energy production) as the human population and the global economy expands. An increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will result in a warmer planet and alterations in global climate.

A warmer planet will result in dramatic changes seriously affecting Oregon and the world. Other states are moving forward with innovative policies relating to climate change. Oregon must act now to maintain its livability and to take advantage of the economic opportunities resulting from a carbon constrained economy. Oregon could lead the nation and the world in developing innovative policies and business investment models to combat changes in global climate.

In the near future, we will be operating under conditions that have not been experienced by human civilization before. Given that the carbon dioxide we release today will remain in the atmosphere for centuries, we must work both to dramatically reduce the amount of carbon dioxide we produce (mitigation) and to adapt to the changes in our climate (adaptation).

At the recommendation of your Advisory Group on Global Warming, you created the Climate Change Integration Group (CCIG) to develop a climate change strategy for Oregon that provides long-term sustainability for the environment, protects public health, considers social equity, creates economic opportunity and expands public awareness. The CCIG has representatives from a broad range of stakeholders including: public health, academia, the business sector, the forest products industry, and environmental advocacy.

The urgent need for adaptation strategies for Oregon – as well as the goals you set forth for Oregon to arrest the growth of greenhouse gas emissions by 2010, to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions to 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and to reduce them to levels 75 percent below 1990 emissions by 2050 -- have established the framework for our conclusions.

Your charge to the Climate Change Integration Group is to meet the following objectives:

- 1) **Develop a toolbox** of options for curbing and coping with climate change. The tool box includes prioritizing and implementing policy recommendations in the *Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions*; assisting state agencies and other groups to incorporate climate change into their policies and programs, and making additional policy and program recommendations to achieve the goals of the strategy;
- 2) **Continually assess** the sensitivity, adaptive capacity, and vulnerability of natural as well as human economic and social systems to climate change in Oregon and prepare recommendations about how the state can become more resilient and prepare for unavoidable changes;
- 3) **Initiate and support research aimed at identifying management opportunities and strategies** for mitigation and adaptation, in collaboration with the Oregon University System; and,
- 4) **Educate Oregonians by** providing a clearinghouse for sharing information with citizens about climate change impacts and the opportunities in Oregon to address those impacts in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

This document provides the initial recommendations of the CCIG and outlines the group's proposals regarding how it will conduct its work in 2007. At the end of 2007, the CCIG will provide a comprehensive report back to you with an in-depth examination of the adaptation, mitigation, public education, and research components of this group's work and their relationship to the state's greenhouse gas strategies.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

The CCIG met five times during 2006 and received presentations from several state agencies, the wine sector, the ski industry and others describing the potential impacts of climate change on their interests and the state. Based on those presentations and the group's deliberations, the following are proposed as initial recommendations for near-term action (legislative or otherwise).

- Support legislative adoption by resolution or as part of a broader climate change legislative package in the 2007 legislative session your previously announced state greenhouse gas reduction goals. The goals adopted in 2004 by the *Oregon Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Reductions* may need to be revisited based on new scientific data.
- Appoint a special committee composed of CCIG members and outside experts every five years, beginning in 2007, charged by the Governor to evaluate the current understanding of climate change science relative to the state's emission reductions goals and make a determination if those goals should be modified in response to new information. The schedule should generally be coordinated with the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientific assessments.
- Permanently establish the Climate Change Integration Group, preferably by legislation, to serve the needs of Oregonians as climate change becomes an even more pressing issue in the near future and provide the means for funding expenses of the CCIG in a manner similar to other state advisory bodies to allow for a diverse geographic representation at meetings and events.

- Dedicate funding to establish a climate change research center for research (environment, public health, economic, etc.) through the Oregon University System, focusing on both adaptation and mitigation strategies for both natural and human ecosystems in response to climate change in Oregon.
- Dedicate funding to establish an ongoing education, communication and outreach program on climate change. This is vital to assure that investments in research and policy measures will be translated into on-the-ground results.
- Establish and fund a program of technical assistance to assist local governments to devise climate change action plans including policy, practices, and programs specific to the concerns of Oregon communities.
- Establish an ongoing tracking system to report on progress in achieving climate change goals, including the establishment of an easily comprehensible graphical reporting format.
- Direct the Department of Administrative Services to coordinate with the CCIG on the state agency greenhouse gas inventory process you established by executive order for creating a greenhouse gas tracking and reporting mechanisms within state agencies.
- Direct relevant state agencies, including DAS, DOE, DEQ, and ODOT to establish an interagency climate change team, and direct those agencies to prepare a progress report on mitigation measures undertaken as part of the *Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions* on a biannual basis. In addition, a brief, graphical summary of progress should be made available on-line at an appropriate location on the Oregon Department of Energy's web page and on the Sustainableoregon.net web page.
- Encourage a non-governmental organization to develop and publicize a catalog of voluntary mitigation actions being taken by Oregon corporations and organizations.
- Continue efforts to develop a regional dialogue with other western states on greenhouse gas reduction strategies.
- Identify opportunities to work with federal agencies and Oregon's congressional delegation on climate change programs and national climate change policy development.
- Conduct an updated and more thorough assessment of the economic impacts of climate change in Oregon. The impact of the recent "Stern Report" in the United Kingdom demonstrates the momentum that can be built from pragmatic economic-focused research.
- Support research that contributes to the work of the Carbon Allocation Task Force by investigating the macroeconomic effects of Oregon's carbon policy, with a particular focus on unintended policy consequences -- such as the transfer of carbon-intensive activities across state borders -- that may result from inappropriate policy choices.
- Direct the Department of Human Services (DHS) to coordinate the development of a report on the public health effects of climate change in Oregon, including recommendations for proactive public health measures and further research.

WORK PLAN FOR 2007

The Climate Change Integration Group has set the following goals for its work in 2007 to prepare the group for its full report to the Governor due at the end of 2007:

- Develop specific recommendations for climate change adaptation strategies, processes, and policies for government agencies, private industry, and the general public.
- Evaluate and propose economic development strategies for expanding the local production and sales of low-carbon goods and services.
- Develop an education and communication strategy on climate change in Oregon to build public will to make the necessary changes to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects. Create material to support the *Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions* suitable for broad-based dissemination and targeted audiences.
- Hold a workshop of climate change experts in early 2007 to fulfill four primary goals: to update the understanding of economic, social, health and ecological climate change impacts on Oregon; to develop a series of socioeconomic scenarios involving key sectors of Oregon's economy; to address key mitigation measures; and to raise awareness among Oregonians about the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change.
- Create a state web site on climate change in Oregon that will be a clearinghouse of climate change information and also link to resources and other web sites.
- Develop suggestions for a research agenda on climate change for the Oregon University System and, to a lesser degree, for state agencies and the private sector.
- Develop and implement a measurement and monitoring system for the *Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions*.
- Evaluate the *Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions* and propose additional measures for reducing greenhouse gasses necessary to achieve the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals (towards the latter half of 2007).

CONCLUSION

Your actions in creating the *Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions* established Oregon as one of leaders in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Your establishment of the CCIG has now expanded these efforts to include the development of adaptation strategies as part of a comprehensive portfolio for Oregon. The urgency of these efforts cannot be overemphasized. There are both opportunities and risks, but our continued prosperity as well as our heritage of environmental stewardship demand that we begin now. We cannot simply wait for an uncertain future to make itself manifest. Our grandchildren will see a planet that is far different than the one we have experienced. We owe it to them to begin the journey now.