

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now



Confronting Climate Change

<https://socan.eco>

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Chair Lieber and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment:

I write as co-facilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now on behalf of the over 1600 rural Southern Oregonians who are SOCAN (<https://socan.eco>). Our mission is to promote awareness and understanding of the science of global warming and its climate change consequences and motivate individual and collective action to address the resulting climate crisis.

State building codes are an accepted mechanism for imposing minimum standards for construction. They prevent unsafe planning and shoddy construction. Building codes can also serve the public need in other ways, for example by ensuring that new construction does no comprise a hazard to aircraft. In the age of climate crisis and increased wildfire threat, it is also reasonable to adopt codes that confer on our buildings reduced greenhouse gas emissions and a measure of resistance to combustion. Such requirements serve the common good.

We note that, [according to DEQ](#) residential and commercial buildings are responsible for over 34% of total statewide greenhouse gas (not just carbon) emissions. While we would like greenhouse gas emissions provisions to be included in the standard statewide Building Codes, we suggest it is at least reasonable to adopt Reach Codes that allow those communities exhibiting a higher level of understanding of, and commitment to, addressing the climate crisis than others to adopt codes which require greater rigor on the part of builders in their construction.

Too often buyers, builders, realtors, and financing agencies exhibit phenomenal short-sightedness. They completely fail to take into account that although energy efficient buildings may cost a little extra, the savings that accrue to subsequent owners in lower maintenance costs rapidly negate these added costs. It is necessary to consider costs the same way we consider energy in construction, i.e., in terms of the distinction between embodied (construction) costs and maintenance costs.

For these reasons, though we would like more stringent basic standards Southern Oregon Climate Action Now endorses SB1518 as it permits municipalities and counties to adopt codes more stringent than the basic statewide codes.

**Amendment 1** would exempt the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region from any Executive Order dealing with Building Codes that addresses carbon emissions reductions. If our state is to undertake meaningful collaboration in the national and global effort to stem global warming and the climate changes consequences that are devastating our state, and will continue to do so into the future, we must all commit to contributing our share to this effort. As rural Oregonians, we are acutely aware of the destruction that climate change is wreaking on our region and will continue to wreak unless we all address the underlying cause. This Amendment has the unfortunate consequence of excusing some

Eastern Oregonians from assuming their share of the responsibility for addressing this problem. In the judgment of these rural Oregonians, all Oregonians, regardless of whether they are urban or rural, should be equally responsible for taking action to reduce greenhouse gas (not just carbon) emissions. Although the amendment only precludes Executive Orders regulating carbon emissions, we infer that the real intent is to preclude regulations addressing all greenhouse gas emissions assessed in terms of their carbon dioxide equivalent value.

Time and again some rural Oregonians seem to argue that they should not be responsible for contributing their share to our collective effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Rural SOCAN activists reject that exceptionalism. We are all in this together; we sink or swim together. Since no justification is offered for this exemption, we see no excuse for such a self-centered attitude.

Given the above argument, we therefore oppose Amendment 1.

Respectfully submitted



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