



Families For Climate

Oregon House Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

March 8, 2021

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Helm and Smith, and Members of the Committee;

I urge the committee to vote in favor of HB 2488 because there are known gaps in our legacy land use goals, and it's time to shore them up for the benefit of future generations.

I come from a long line of Ohio farmers – grain, hogs, poultry, --but mostly a big apple orchard planted on Miami land by my great granddad, George. Folks say he was an ornery cuss, and my great-grandma Jessie was a saint for putting up with him. We never met but he planted most of the street trees in our village and his giant maples shaded me in the park playground on hot July afternoons. Much later, income off that farm put me through college. Land use, farm aid, and lending policies were all designed to allow Swiss-German families like mine to build and share wealth.

I can't talk politics with my Republican family -- but hard work, honesty and looking out for future generations are values we all share. My husband and I are raising two young Oregonians who love the land. They benefit from a land use legacy left by legislators like you and Tom McCall from the Greatest Generation.

By voting for 2488, today's Boomers and GenX legislators have a chance to make an historic difference in two ways:

First, undo mistakes of the past. Tribes and other historically marginalized groups must have a seat at the land use table. Excluding people of color has always been wrong, but now Oregon knows better. Leaving African American communities out of decision-making processes results in tragedies like running I-5 through the heart of Portland's Albina District; leaving tribes out of the conversation to run fossil fuel pipelines through tribal lands violates their sovereignty; siting polluting facilities near low-income communities of color leads to disparate health impacts. As the poet Maya Angelou says, "When you know better, do better." It's time to demonstrate that we make land use decisions that benefit all Oregonians, not just those of Anglo-European descent who show up to hearings.

Second, build upon the legacy of 1970's Republican leaders who boldly put national laws in place, giving us the clean water & air we appreciate today. At the time, lawmakers did not include carbon because they never would have suspected how profoundly we, a few billion humans, could disrupt ocean chemistry, planetary circulation & weather systems; even though internal records from Exxon show scientists recognized the risk of fossil fuel-induced climate change as early as the 1950's.¹

It doesn't matter whether Oregon legislators agree with the science; now is the time for action, just in case 99% of climate scientists happen to be right. After all, if 99% of mechanics say you need a brake job, you wouldn't wait. It's time to add a distinct climate adaptation and mitigation goal to our land use code. It's

¹ https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/America_Misled.pdf

² <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/tech/science/environment/2020/01/24/pacific-northwest->

critical for the State to provide technical assistance to affected communities and, similar to goals 1-19, Oregon's local planners will muddle through and figure it out together.

In summary, we have less than 10 years to put our shoulder to the wheel and build a carbon-light economy for our kids. This starts the minute the legislature sends a clear signal that we value predictable rainfall for Oregon farmers; we value healthy forests; and we value our Dungeness crab² and shellfish industries. It's too big a gamble to do nothing.

This session, let Oregon lead by example and strengthen our role as America's land use innovator by adopting Goal 20 to address environmental justice and climate change. What's good for future generations, builds a greater nation. We owe this to Oregon's children, including the great-grandchildren yet to come.

Thank you for your service on the Energy & Environment Committee;



Noelle Studer-Spevak
Board of Directors, Families for Climate

² <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/tech/science/environment/2020/01/24/pacific-northwest-dungeness-crab-larvae-suffering-shell-damage-ocean-acidification/4563834002/>