

Strategic Direction

2012-2022

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Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon



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WHO WE ARE

OUR MISSION

Oregon Environmental Council advances innovative, collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Oregonians will live healthier lives because our air, water and land will be clean; our food will be sustainably produced; and the products, energy and transportation that make our modern life possible will be free of toxic chemicals and safe for our environment and climate. Urban and rural Oregonians will thrive in a sustainable, low-carbon economy. Oregon businesses, governments, non-profit institutions—and individual Oregonians—will safeguard the natural world that is essential to our health, our wealth and our quality of life.

HOW WE SUCCEED

Founded in 1968, Oregon Environmental Council has a long and well-regarded history of securing environmental protections that support the health of every Oregonian and the health of this place we call home. We advocate impactful, lasting solutions that get at the source of Oregon's environmental problems. We forward creative solutions that are based on sound scientific evidence, economic analysis and life cycle thinking. We respect the needs of Oregon's diverse communities, promote solutions that support a highly functioning economy, and provide leadership and opportunity for all Oregonians to create and implement a vision for a healthy environment.

GOALS

CLIMATE PROTECTION

to safeguard our communities and economies

We need to act because...

Climate change threatens the things we care about most: our health, our water, our air, our food, our security and our economic prosperity. The impacts of climate change—including warmer temperatures, loss of summer snowpack, increases in pests and diseases, more severe weather extremes, higher sea levels, storm surges, and other marine impacts—create serious challenges to the way we grow food, supply water, manage forests, save endangered species and protect human health. Low-income Oregonians and people with health conditions like asthma will bear the greatest burden of climate impacts.

The future we're working toward...

Oregon will limit greenhouse gases to levels safe for the climate. Smart adaptation measures will make Oregon's people and places more resilient to the impacts of climate change. We will live, work and travel in ways that are highly efficient and powered by clean, low-carbon, renewable energy sources. Our low-carbon communities will be vibrant, livable and affordable.





CC Opal Creek by bret.vogel

CLEAN AND PLENTIFUL WATER

to support people, fish and wildlife, and rural and urban businesses

We need to act because...

Nearly every river in Oregon is out of compliance with water quality standards that protect human health and aquatic life. Oregonians are advised to avoid eating fish found in nineteen bodies of water in Oregon because these fish are contaminated with mercury, PCBs and other pollutants. In addition, a growing number of toxic chemicals whose impacts are unknown are found in our waters. Two-thirds of Oregonians rely solely or in part on groundwater as our source of drinking water, and in parts of the state wells are going dry or groundwater is unsafe. More water has been promised to farmers and communities than some of our rivers and aquifers can deliver, and climate change and population growth will exacerbate this water scarcity.

The future we're working toward...

Oregon's rivers, lakes and groundwater will be healthy. Oregonians will have safe sources of drinking water and be able to swim, boat and fish in our rivers and lakes—and eat what we catch—without risking our health. Our groundwater levels will be stable, and our rivers will flow with enough water to support communities, businesses, agriculture, native fish and wildlife. Protected water resources will provide resiliency in the face of climate change.

TOXIC-FREE ENVIRONMENTS

to protect human health, starting with children's health

We need to act because...

Oregonians are exposed to harmful chemicals through the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the products in our homes and buildings. Exposure to toxic chemicals contributes to a range of chronic diseases and disabilities, including cancers, reproductive harm, birth defects, asthma, learning and developmental disabilities, and neurodegenerative diseases. Children are particularly vulnerable to toxic pollution as their bodies develop; and Oregon's people-of-color, indigenous and low-income communities often bear a disproportionate burden of exposure to toxic pollution.

The future we're working toward...

Oregon children will live and play in toxic-free environments and use toxic-free products. No community will experience disproportionate exposures to toxic pollution. Safe environments for children will result in safe environments for everyone.



OUR SOLUTIONS ARE CROSSCUTTING

OEC's solutions are:

- **Impactful**—they get at the source of Oregon's environmental problems
- **Equitable**—they enhance everyone's wellbeing
- **Lasting**—they consider future generations
- **Economically sound**—they support a highly functioning, sustainable economy
- **Scientifically sound**—they are based on scientific evidence and life cycle thinking



- ● ● Sustainable food and farms
- ● Water conservation and efficiency
- ● ● Sustainable stormwater management
- ● Water pollution prevention
- ● ● Eco-friendly transportation
- ● Safe, non-toxic products
- ● ● Energy-efficient, toxic-free green buildings
- ● Integrated environmental health policies
- ● Comprehensive carbon-reduction policies

By 2022, Oregon's people and environment will be healthier as OEC promotes the following solution sets to achieve our long-term goals.

Sustainable food and farms ● ● ●

Oregon will be a national leader in a thriving food production and farming industry that protects our health and environment. The percent of food eaten in Oregon produced sustainably and grown regionally will increase significantly. Oregon will achieve a 25% improvement in healthy streamside vegetation on agricultural lands and a 25% reduction in agricultural runoff pollution from 2012 levels.

Water conservation and efficiency ● ●

Water resources planning at the state, basin and local scales will address the impacts of climate change and make water conservation and efficiency a central priority. Farmers, ranchers, and rural and municipal water suppliers will maximize water conservation and efficiency measures. Participation in the Allocation of Conserved Water program will quadruple from 2012 levels, and water use will be measured at all significant diversions. More rivers will have instream water rights to support fish and wildlife, and all water rights—both instream and out-of-stream—will be fulfilled more consistently than they are today.

Sustainable stormwater management ● ● ●

All cities on water quality-limited streams or with populations greater than 20,000 will manage their stormwater to keep toxic contaminants from entering Oregon's waterways and groundwater and to preserve pre-development hydrology. All new development will strive to manage stormwater in a way that safely mimics the way nature manages rainfall.

Water pollution prevention ● ●

Water quality in our rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater will be improved through substantial reductions in polluted urban runoff, as well as nutrient and pesticide runoff and soil erosion from agriculture. An increasing number of Oregon river miles will be rated as 'good' or 'excellent' for water quality on the Oregon Water Quality Index, and toxic pollution will be monitored statewide. A majority of drinking water sourced from surface and groundwater will be safe to drink, and it will be safer to eat fish from Oregon waters.

Eco-friendly transportation ● ● ●

A quarter of urban, suburban and small-town Oregonians will live in neighborhoods with safe, walkable and bikeable access to daily destinations. Two-thirds of Oregonians will have reliable low-carbon transportation options for longer-distance trips. The carbon content of transportation fuels will be 10% lower than 2010 levels, and Oregon will be less dependent on petroleum. The production of homegrown, advanced clean fuels will create and sustain local jobs throughout the state. Oregon's new system for funding transportation (compelled by declining gas tax revenues) will be designed to give Oregonians more control over transportation costs, encourage more efficient travel, support transportation options, and reduce harmful environmental impacts.





Safe, non-toxic products ● ●

Oregon manufacturers will embrace green chemistry efforts to reduce or eliminate the use and generation of hazardous substances in products and processes. State and local governments will purchase products and services that minimize the use of toxic chemicals. Oregonians will have more information on toxic chemicals in the products they buy. Oregon will have mechanisms in place to both fully fund robust toxic reduction initiatives and spur the creation of less toxic products and processes.

Energy-efficient, toxic-free green buildings

● ● ● All new buildings in Oregon will be designed to be energy and water efficient and to minimize the use of toxic building materials; at least one-quarter will be certified “net-zero,” i.e., produce no net carbon emissions. One-half of Oregon’s homes, businesses, factories and public buildings will be upgraded to be 30% more energy efficient. Energy-efficiency will be a robust industry sector.

Integrated environmental health policies ● ●

The state government and some local governments will have comprehensive policies in place to protect Oregonians from toxic chemicals—policies emphasizing the most hazardous chemicals and the most vulnerable people and communities. Health problems triggered by pollution will be on the decline, especially among children in lower-income and people-of-color communities.

Comprehensive carbon-reduction policies

● ● Carbon will be priced to more accurately reflect its economic and environmental costs, and equity implications will be addressed. Key agencies and sectors—such as energy, buildings and transportation—will be required to meet the state’s greenhouse gas reduction goals. The key carbon-reducing actions in the Governor’s 2012 Ten-Year Energy Action Plan will have been fully implemented, and the West Coast will demonstrate joint climate leadership that serves as a model for other regions. Oregon will meet its 2020 greenhouse gas reduction goals and be on track to meet its 2050 goals.

OUR APPROACH

- We advance **effective public policies** that safeguard Oregon's future.
- We promote **viable environmental practices** for businesses, communities and families.
- We **build broad-based coalitions**, finding common ground in support of environmental solutions.

WE BRING OREGONIANS TOGETHER

We partner with all Oregonians—of all ages, races, ethnicities and genders; from all communities, rural, urban and suburban; of any political affiliation; and from all walks of life—to create a healthier future for our state.

Elected officials and government agencies providing effective and equitable environmental leadership

Business leaders adopting environmentally responsible practices

Farmers and other food suppliers practicing environmental stewardship

Health and science professionals advocating for scientifically sound environmental solutions

Individuals living eco-friendly lives and speaking up to safeguard the environment they value



JOIN US—IT'S YOUR OREGON

We need to act because...

We all impact the environment, and all of us have a responsibility to protect it. A healthy environment requires lifestyle changes, including consuming less, changes in “business as usual,” and leadership on the part of decision-makers.

The future we’re working toward together...

Urban and rural businesses will thrive economically by integrating efficiency and environmental stewardship as standard practice in their operations. Elected officials and government agencies will recognize a healthy environment as a fundamental priority, provide effective environmental leadership, and ensure meaningful involvement from all Oregonians in developing, implementing and enforcing environmental actions. Government agencies will have the resources they need to protect Oregon’s natural resources. Regardless of race, gender, income or affiliation, all Oregonians will be equally protected from environmental harm and be empowered to speak up for environmental protection.



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