

A scenic landscape of Oregon featuring snow-capped mountains under a dramatic, orange-hued sky at sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, there is a dense forest of evergreen trees, and a small field with bare trees is visible in the middle ground.

# OREGON CLIMATE ACTION PLAN **TWO**-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

**MARCH 2022**

# OREGON CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

## TWO-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT



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## **Opening letter from Oregon Climate Action Plan (OCAP) Steering Committee**

Since Governor Brown signed the historic “Oregon Climate Action Plan” (executive order 20-04) in March 2020, Oregon has both regained a position of national leadership in the clean energy transition and unfortunately become a poster child for climate change. Our deadly and devastating climate-fueled heat waves, wildfires and drought have made international headlines, while threatening lives and livelihoods of Oregonians across the state.

Unprecedented extreme heat killed more than 100 Oregonians last summer, claiming the lives of essential workers and dozens of individuals who died alone in too hot apartments. We’ve also lost lives and over 4,000 homes and buildings from wildfires in just the past two years alone-- entire towns have burned to the ground, and smoke is now a constant part of summer and fall. And as of the time of this publication, 75 percent of Oregon is experiencing severe drought.

These ever-worsening climate impacts have only underscored the need to use every tool in our toolbox to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and advance the transition to a clean energy future-- and to do so in a way that prioritizes those communities disproportionately impacted by climate harms.

Thanks to robust advocacy engagement on behalf of the OCAP Coalition and environmental justice and climate partners across the state, the leadership of Governor Kate Brown, and extensive work on the part of our state agencies, Oregon made significant progress in year two of the Oregon Climate Action Plan to reduce climate pollution, address historic environmental injustice, and promote resilient communities and economic vitality across Oregon.

Thanks to the new programs and policies such as the Department of Environmental Quality’s Climate Protection Program and Advanced Clean Truck Rules, coupled with the legislature’s passage of 100% Clean Energy for All, 2021 marked the year that leaders in Oregon gave teeth to long-standing emissions reduction goals. In addition, for the first time in state history, Oregon now has concrete goals and recommendations for advancing carbon sequestration by Oregon’s forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands. We also have new protections for people on the frontlines of the climate crisis: Oregon is set to adopt the strongest standards in the nation for workers from excessive heat and wildfire smoke.

By reducing emissions from our top polluting sectors and prioritizing communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis, these actions set the path for Oregon to meet our climate goals, as well as to spur job growth and technological innovation, improve community health, and create cleaner, cheaper, healthier energy and transportation options that will benefit Oregon jobs, families, and the economy for years to come.



However, additional state action will be needed to build on this incredible progress and to fully capture pollution from these sources and ensure pollution reductions happen at the pace and scale necessary to limit catastrophic climate impacts.

As concluded in a new [Energy Innovation report](#) released today, even with current policies, Oregon is not meeting the level of climate progress needed or envisioned. And while Oregon has reemerged as a United States climate leader, our state will need to go bigger and bolder every year to make up for decades of inaction. With increased ambition and additional action, state policymakers can ensure that Oregon achieves OCAP's targets of reducing emissions 45 percent below 1990 emissions by 2035 and at least 80 percent below 2050, and should go even farther to reduce emissions in-line with what the best available science and the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded is necessary for a safe climate future.

The February 2022 [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](#) is yet another wake up call. The report highlights the devastating damage that climate change is already wreaking on people and our planet— and the urgent need to prepare for more changes to come, as climate disasters will only increase until carbon pollution is reduced to zero. Significantly, the report underscores the limits of adaptation and the consequences of continuing to rely on fossil fuels, and the urgent need to stop climate pollution and avoid widespread catastrophes that will be impossible to prepare for.

Oregon must continue to build on the progress of the past year. Critically, the legislature must act to ensure this transition happens in a way that creates a better future, in which clean energy and livable conditions are affordable and accessible to all. This means increasing equity and access to the clean energy economy, reducing energy burden for lower income households, and ensuring Oregonians across the income spectrum have access to these climate solutions with minimal barriers.

This is our moment to build a new economy with justice and prosperity for every community and a livable planet for future generations. Our organizations and the broader OCAP Coalition are eager to continue working with policymakers in Oregon to accelerate our transition to a clean energy economy, benefit Oregon families and working people, improve health outcomes, lift up frontline communities, and help to ensure our economy and communities are more resilient.



## GUIDING VALUES

The Oregon Climate Action Plan (OCAP) Steering Committee organizes and guides the efforts of more than 50 climate, environmental justice, youth, labor, public health, business, and community-based organizations dedicated to supporting the state of Oregon in maximizing greenhouse gas emissions reductions, centering the needs of frontline communities and addressing historic environmental injustice, and ensuring an equitable transition to a clean energy future.

Since March 2020, our coalition has consistently engaged with state decision-makers in every stage of OCAP's implementation and advocated and assessed progress according to our core values:

**Climate:** Has the agency prioritized climate mitigation and emissions reductions and/or carbon sequestration in decision-making? Based policy decisions in the best available science, with emissions reductions timelines that reflect the urgency of the crisis? Made funding decisions that prioritize investments in clean energy and clean technology innovation and/or sequestration?

**Equity:** Has the agency demonstrated commitment to centering equity and remedying impacts to vulnerable and impacted communities? Facilitated outreach/incorporated input from frontline communities? Integrated equity implications in decision-making?

**Public engagement:** Has the agency provided a structure for public engagement that is transparent and enables input and engagement from Oregonians representing a broad and diverse demographic, including ample opportunities for public input via formal public comment periods/meetings? Is there representation from a diversity of stakeholders and communities on Rulemaking Advisory Committees? How has the agency incorporated public feedback?



# CAP & REDUCE



## DECISION-MAKERS

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) | Environmental Quality Commission (EQC)

## WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

In December 2021, the Environmental Quality Commission adopted a historic new “Climate Protection Program” (CPP) that establishes science-based, mandatory emissions limits requiring oil companies and gas utilities to **cut their climate pollution 50% by 2035, and 90% by 2050**. The decision came after a robust year-and-a-half long rulemaking process and extensive advocacy from the OCAP Coalition, partners, and Oregonians across the state. **Oregon is only the third state** in the nation to set mandatory, **enforceable limits on greenhouse gas pollution** from fossil fuels.

### The EQC-adopted CPP will:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from oil companies and fossil gas utilities 50% by 2035 and 90% by 2050;
- Establish science-based targets for industrial facilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Invest in clean energy projects that will support more affordable renewable energy and transportation options in environmental justice communities across the state.

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The CPP went into effect January 1, 2022, setting the path for our homes and buildings, transportation systems, and industries to begin operating in a cleaner, healthier way that protects Oregon now and for future generations.

Over the coming months, DEQ will work to set up the CPP’s Community Climate Investment (CCI) program. The CCI program gives fossil fuel suppliers the option to invest in projects to reduce emissions in Oregon communities as part of their compliance, and could result in up to \$500 million annually in investments, prioritizing pollution reduction projects in environmental justice communities across Oregon.



## KEY DATA

**7,600 public comments** submitted during the public comment period.

**7 out of 10 comments** supported strong emissions reductions through the CPP.

Up to **\$500 million invested** annually in Community Climate Investment projects, benefiting environmental justice and other communities across Oregon.

**\$2 billion saved** in avoided health impacts to Oregonians by 2050.

**14,100 net jobs created** and \$1.35 billion added to Oregon’s GDP annually by 2050.

**309 million metric tons** of climate pollution reduced by 2050.





**"We must act decisively and urgently to keep what makes Oregon so special – the fisheries, the farms, the snowy mountains, the forests and vineyards...Guided by the best science, DEQ's Climate Protection Program is a critical step forward to achieve deep, long-term reductions in Oregon greenhouse gas emissions, and to help strengthen climate resilience across the state."**

**- EQC Chair Kathleen George.**

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS**

While we are excited to celebrate this much-needed climate protection, additional state action will be needed to ensure that pollution reductions happen at the pace and scale necessary to limit catastrophic climate impacts, and that all Oregonians are able to reap the cost-saving and health benefits of these clean energy solutions. This means policymakers in Oregon must take action to:

Promote healthier communities by increasing energy efficiency and electrification to rein in fossil gas use in homes, commercial buildings and industry.

Prioritize investments in electric, safe, affordable and accessible transportation options to reduce harmful externalities such as tailpipe pollution and death and injury to cyclists and pedestrians, and build an equitable transportation system.

Expand regulations to fully cover pollution from all major stationary sources of emissions, including fossil fueled power plants and major industrial facilities.

**"We now have a comprehensive pathway to a cleaner energy future in Oregon, one that will bring new jobs, cleaner air and, most importantly, a strategy that shows yet another way for states to lead on climate."**

**- DEQ Director, Richard Whitman.**



# CLEAN BUILDINGS



## DECISION-MAKERS

Building Codes Division (BCD); Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE);  
Public Utility Commission (PUC)

## WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

Homes and buildings are Oregon's second-largest source of climate and air pollution, predominantly from burning methane gas and other fossil fuels. They're also our first line of defense against climate-fueled harms like extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

OCAP included important directives for the BCD to adopt new standards to increase the energy efficiency for our homes and buildings; ODOE to increase energy efficiency standards for appliances; and the PUC to prioritize proceedings and activities that advance decarbonization in the utility sector, and exercise its broad statutory authority to reduce GHG pollution, support energy affordability, and ensure system reliability and resource adequacy. All have the potential to save Oregonians money on energy bills and create healthier living environments for people across the state.

During the 2021 legislative session, OCAP advocates successfully secured legislation (HB 2062) to approve ODOE energy efficiency standard updates for 11 different products. ODOE estimates these standards will cut nearly 50,000 metric tons of carbon pollution annually by 2025, and over 100,000 metric tons of carbon pollution annually by 2035, just by making sure more efficient products are available when it comes time to replace them. HB 2062 also provided ODOE with a clear pathway to make periodic updates to appliance efficiency standards, which will deliver even more benefits.

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Unfortunately, BCD and its advisory boards again passed up opportunities this year to advance energy efficiency improvements through building code updates. At the same time, BCD boards continue to lack needed diversity to ensure adequate representation and voices are at the table to drive equitable, community-centered decision-making.

In addition, while OCAP advocates are pleased that PUC has made progress on its "Natural Gas Fact Finding" proceeding (UM 2178), more work is needed to effectively assess the climate and energy efficiency impacts of fossil "natural" gas heating and cooling of homes and buildings and the potential impacts to ratepayers of continuing to rely on and expand fossil gas infrastructure.



## KEY DATA

**\$30 million in annual energy cost savings** by 2025 and nearly **\$100 million in savings** by 2035 thanks to ODOE's new energy efficiency standards.

More than **100 people died across 28 Oregon cities** during last summer's unprecedented climate-fueled heat wave; the majority of who passed away did not have access to life-saving cooling devices.

**\$25 million** approved by the legislature to protect people against extreme heat by providing electric heat pumps to environmental justice communities in Oregon.

Electric heat pumps save Oregon consumers **\$2,000 to \$3,000** when compared to gas furnaces.



**"Drought, fire and other climate disruptions put the most vulnerable Oregonians at great risk. By investing in resilient homes and clean energy, we can build safer and healthier communities, reduce the cost of energy for consumers, and create good-paying jobs."**

– Oregon State Senator Kate Lieber, Senate Committee on Energy and Environment Chair.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

We cannot wait to act to protect our communities and ensure all homes are resilient. Policymakers must take action in the coming year to rapidly reduce pollution from the buildings sector, by supporting cleaner, energy efficient, and affordable homes and buildings for all Oregonians. Specifically, we are eager to see progress on the following:

Legislature and state agencies adopt comprehensive policy solutions advancing cleaner, healthier, more efficient and affordable homes and buildings.

BCD advances strong updates to the residential, commercial, and Reach building codes to achieve the OCAP-directed requirement to reduce energy use 60% compared to 2006 Oregon residential and commercial codes.

BCD, the Governor, and the legislature work together to improve the public process around development of the building codes, including ensuring more diverse representation on BCD advisory boards.

OPUC advances strong regulations to strategically curb the gas system while protecting low-income ratepayers, including revoking ratepayer-funded gas line extension allowances and replacing all incentives for new gas hookups and appliances with those for electric alternatives.

**\$221,326,511** in Oregon health impacts in 2017 due to burning fossil fuels in buildings.



# NATURAL & WORKING LAND



## DECISION-MAKERS

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Board of Forestry (BOF), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), , Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC),

## WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

After a year-long process, the Oregon Global Warming Coalition (OGWC) voted to approve its Natural and Working Lands Proposal, which incorporated significant input by OCAP advocates. For the first time in our state's history, the report identified concrete goals for advancing carbon sequestration by Oregon's forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands. Specifically, the proposal recommends that Oregon sequester at least an additional 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e) per year in Oregon's natural and working lands and waters by 2030, and at least 9.5 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2050. These goals are separate from and in addition to Oregon's greenhouse gas reduction targets achieved by transitioning off fossil fuels to clean energy.

As a first step in advancing the OGWC's recommendations, the Natural & Working Lands Bill (SB 1534), which would lay the foundation for new programs to increase carbon sequestration and climate resilience in Oregon, was introduced for consideration during the 2022 legislative session.

In addition, the Board of Forestry unanimously approved its Climate Change and Carbon Plan (CCCP). OCAP forest policy stakeholders successfully engaged in the extensive public engagement process to secure new goals to reduce climate emissions, increase carbon sequestration, and positively benefit climate-impacted and resource-dependent communities. The CCCP positions Oregon as a regional leader in climate-smart forestry, including both climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

Following the Board's adoption of the CCCP, ODF included carbon- and climate-specific goals within its Western Oregon State Forest Management Plan. ODF circulated a public survey and held numerous listening sessions with stakeholders. Due in part to the OCAP coalition's advocacy efforts, ODF received more than 1,300 comments in support of carbon and climate considerations in forest management decisions.

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

In addition to the above progress, additional state agency progress on OCAP implementation includes:

- OWEB passed a Climate Resolution that commits to incorporating climate change into funding and policy decisions through an inclusive and meaningful engagement process.



## KEY DATA

**1,000 individuals and organizations** provided recommendations on the OGWC's Natural and Working Lands sequestration report.

If implemented, the OGWC's new sequestration goals would be equivalent to cutting pollution from **2 million gas powered cars for a year.**

**\$5 million** approved by the legislature for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, which will support climate-smart agricultural work.

- OWEB initiated a rulemaking process to include climate change criteria in their grantmaking decisions.
- OWRD received funding to establish a position for coordination, planning and outreach on earthquakes, drought, floods, climate change, and dam failures, and work on OCAP implementation, climate adaptation, and more.
- OWRD postponed the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, which is a key document for updating the long range focus on climate change.
- The Board of Agriculture is considering a climate resolution.
- The Oregon Department of Agriculture established a new Soil Health Specialist Position.

**"It's in my economic interest to be thinking about soil carbon. It's literally what feeds the plants that feeds the cows."**

*– Jared Gardner, owner, Nehalem River Ranch.*

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

While the goals themselves are worth celebrating, there is a long road ahead for Oregon to implement the recommendations set out in the OGWC's Natural and Working Lands Proposal. This will require state policymakers to make significant investments in programs to increase adoption of climate-smart management practices, including technical assistance, incentives, data, research, and new rules and regulations.

There is also a role for the legislature to play in ensuring that our state agencies and commissions have the resources and capacity needed to continue making progress in advancing carbon sequestration and storage on our natural and working lands. This includes funding to:

- Support the OGWC in its role to coordinate state agency actions
- Make ODA's Soil Health Specialist position permanent
- Create new climate research and policy positions at ODF

In addition, as OWRD moves forward with its newly-established Regional Water Planning and Management Work Group to develop a framework and path for state-supported water planning and management at the water region and/or basin level, there is a need to ensure climate considerations are central to water planning and management recommendations. Further, OWRD should more holistically assess how the department can best advance the recommendations in the OGWC's Natural and Working Lands Proposal.

**"We raised our voices to strengthen these recommendations and we were heard. We support nearly all of the recommendations in the Proposal and our producers are ready to be part of the solution."**

*- Megan Kemple, Director of Policy Advocacy, Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network.*



# TRANSPORTATION



## DECISION-MAKERS

Oregon Dept. of Transportation (ODOT); Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC); Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Environmental Quality Commission (EQC); Land Conservation & Development Commission (LCDC); Dept. of Land Conservation & Development (DLCD); Oregon Dept. of Energy (ODOE)

## WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

State agencies took important steps in 2021 to reduce emissions from our top polluting sector and transition Oregon toward a healthier, more equitable, zero-emissions transportation future. Major victories include:

- The EQC adopted two Clean Truck Rules that will speed the transition to electric and cleaner medium and heavy duty vehicles by phasing out polluting diesel engines in favor of zero-emissions trucks, buses, vans, and more. In doing so, these rules will improve public health by reducing harmful diesel pollution and support green job growth.

- ODOT finalized its Transportation Electrification Infrastructure Needs Analysis (TEINA), which highlights gaps in electric vehicle charging infrastructure and proposes solutions to help accelerate widespread transportation electrification in Oregon. The report underscores the need for continued collaboration among stakeholders to quickly and equitably deploy public charging infrastructure around the state.

- The EQC adopted new rules to accelerate transportation electrification under the Oregon Clean Fuels Program, which will help incentivize the electrification of vehicle fleets, encourage the use of renewable energy, and prioritize transportation electrification investments in environmental justice communities.

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

DLCD is expected to complete its Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking in mid-2022. OCAP advocates have pushed to strengthen the proposed rules, which will require larger jurisdictions to plan for higher density communities that allow people to meet their needs without being dependent on a private car.

DEQ has initiated a rulemaking to expand Oregon's successful Clean Fuels Program to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels by at least 25% by 2035. OCAP advocates are pushing DEQ to adopt stronger reduction targets to better achieve Oregon's climate goals.



## KEY DATA

**\$21.1 billion in net societal benefits and nearly 84,000 respiratory illnesses avoided by 2050** with the adoption of DEQ's Clean Truck Rules.

**5x** increase needed in the number of public electric vehicle charging ports by 2025, and a **44x** increase by 2035.

**\$1.2 billion** in federal funding for transportation coming to Oregon, including **\$52 million to expand electric vehicle charging, \$82 million for carbon reduction, and \$412 million in discretionary funding.**

The PUC is continuing work on its Transportation Electrification (TE) Investment Framework, a decision-making tool to help increase TE investments in a way that better balances the needs of the public and ratepayers more broadly. OCAP advocates continue to provide input on how to prioritize equitable TE investments.

The OTC is considering how to invest new federal funding in Oregon. OCAP advocates are calling for investments that reduce climate pollution, prioritize historically underinvested communities, and promote economic and social mobility through expanded transportation access.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

With a number of transportation-focused rule-making processes and decision-points upcoming, there are many near-term opportunities for our state decision-makers to demonstrate their commitment to prioritizing equitable outcomes and reducing emissions from our biggest polluting sector. In the coming months, the OCAP coalition will advocate to ensure:

The DEQ develops and EQC adopts an ambitious Clean Fuels Program expansion to significantly reduce the carbon intensity of our transportation fuels.

The OTC invests new federal funding to maximize climate and equity outcomes, by prioritizing investments in public transit, pedestrian, micro-mobility, and equitable electrification infrastructure.

The Governor and DEQ advance new rules establishing requirements for zero-emission light-duty vehicle sales by 2030.

The legislature adopts an ambitious 2023 transportation package with strong equity and climate focus.

Regional coordination of the ODOT tolling program in the Portland Metro Region to focus on managing the system for demand, and using the revenue for improving climate and equity outcomes.

Legislators rely on TEINA recommendations to make policy and budget decisions that support robust and equitable public car and truck charging infrastructure across Oregon.

**"The era of freeway expansions must end and we must collectively work towards providing Oregonians with safer, greener, and more human-scale ways of getting to where they need to go."**

*- Oregon State Representative Winsvey Campos*

# CLEAN ENERGY

## DECISION-MAKERS

Public Utility Commission (PUC)



## WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

OCAP directed the PUC to prioritize proceedings and activities that advance decarbonization in the utility sector, and exercise its broad statutory authority to reduce climate pollution, mitigate energy burden experienced by utility customers, and ensure system reliability and resource adequacy. The PUC took important steps in 2021 to advance an equitable clean energy future for all Oregonians, including:

- Improvements to the Oregon Community Solar Program to ensure benefits are accessible by low-income Oregonians, increasing the discount for low income subscribers from 20 percent to 40 percent.
- Policies that kept the power on for vulnerable Oregonians facing pandemic hardships.
- Utilities have submitted Distribution System Planning (DSP) proposals, each with detailed community engagement strategies to include the public more in the process. This is remarkable since DSP has traditionally been the sole domain of the utilities. Now, communities have an opportunity to define how the system can benefit them.
- PUC initiated a “Natural Gas Fact Finding” proceeding (UM 2178), to gain a better understanding of how different decarbonization scenarios will impact customers in Oregon, with the goal of informing future decision-making.

Active resource adequacy docket (UM 2143), allowing a robust conversation between utilities and customers about how the utilities’ ability to provide power can be met not just according to power demands of customers but also the benefits to customers of a cleaner energy system.

Separate from OCAP’s directives, the legislature made significant progress in 2021 to decarbonize Oregon’s electricity grid and support equitable access to clean energy, by passing legislation that will:

- Transition Oregon’s electricity grid to 100% clean, emissions-free energy sources by 2040 (HB 2021).
- Reduce energy burden (HB 2475) by allowing the PUC to set different rates for lower-income Oregonians and support engagement by environmental justice advocates in PUC decision-making on utility rates.
- Provide better long-term support for energy efficiency projects through the Energy Trust of Oregon (HB 3141), and require that 25% of the funding for small-scale renewable projects be dedicated to low- and moderate-income customers.



## KEY DATA

**\$9 million:** amount NW Natural is asking Oregon customers to pay to cover bonuses for top executives.

**1,000 low-income Oregonians** are now subscribed to and benefiting from the Oregon Community Solar Program.





**"The PUC's staff worked hard with program partners and the community to find a way to make [the Oregon Community Solar Program] a more viable option for low-income residents. We approved their recommendation because supporting access to solar for all Oregonians is an important outcome sought by the Oregon legislature."**

*– Megan Decker, PUC Chair.*

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS**

Together, HB 2021 and the EQC's newly-adopted Climate Protection Program set the path for Oregon to significantly reduce emissions from some of our top polluting sectors. However, there is much work to be done on behalf of the PUC and the legislature to ensure an affordable, equitable transition to a decarbonized future. Looking ahead to the next year, we are eager to see additional progress to:

- Better integrate the social cost of carbon and performance-based ratemaking, which will better ensure key climate and efficiency metrics are incorporated into utility planning.
- Effectively evaluate the future of fossil "natural" gas in Oregon (UM 2178) and adopt regulatory tools to ensure the most cost-effective, most prudent and least risky pathway to achieve deep decarbonization of the fossil gas sector.
- Regulate emissions from in-state fossil gas plants that export electricity or merchant-owned gas plants in Oregon, which are not covered by HB 2021 or the Climate Protection Program.
- Invest in distributed energy resources (e.g., community-owned solar), storage, and microgrid, which provide community economic benefits and help increase climate resiliency.



# PUBLIC HEALTH

## DECISION-MAKERS

Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Oregon OSHA)



## WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

During summer 2021's record-shattering heat dome, extreme heat killed more than 100 Oregonians, including a migrant farmworker named Sebastian Francisco Perez, who died alone while laying irrigation pipes at a farm in St. Paul, Oregon.

Spurred by the death of Francisco Perez and pressure from the OCAP Coalition, Governor Brown directed Oregon OSHA to adopt emergency temporary rules to protect workers from exposure to excessive heat and wildfire smoke. The rules require simple, common sense protections, like providing access to shade and cold drinking water, increasing the frequency and length of work breaks, and requiring active monitoring for heat illness.

Building on the findings of its OCAP-directed Climate and Health in Oregon 2020 report, OHA has made significant progress to ensure public health systems across Oregon are better equipped to respond to ever-worsening climate impacts. The OCAP Coalition successfully advocated in the 2021 legislative session to secure \$60 million for OHA's Public Health Modernization plan. OHA is now investing these funds to support local and Tribal authorities and community based organizations in fostering public health and community resilience in the face of ever-worsening climate impacts.

In addition, OHA made significant strides in developing a first-of-its-kind study on climate change impacts on youth mental health and depression in Oregon. OHA facilitated robust stakeholder outreach and roundtables with youth communities, making specific efforts to connect with Native and Tribal youth, youth most affected by the wildfires of 2020, and youth from rural, low-income, and communities of color. OHA reported their initial findings at the national level at the American Public Health Association annual conference and with DEQ during the Climate Protection Program.

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The OCAP Coalition has continued to push Oregon OSHA to adopt strong permanent protections for workers from heat and smoke. We expect Oregon OSHA to adopt final rules later this Spring, which will be in effect for the 2022 heat and smoke season. These efforts are also making an impact on a national scale, where the Biden Administration and Department of Labor have taken new measures to protect workers from the hazards of extreme heat.



## KEY DATA

**100+** people killed by extreme heat during the Summer 2021 heat dome(s).

**254** complaints submitted to Oregon OSHA between June 24 and 28th, just for excessive heat exposure.

**\$40 billion in annual earnings lost** by mid-century due to exposure of outdoor workers to extreme heat.

**\$5,359:** average cost of a heat illness-related hospitalization.

Due to the continued need to dedicate resources to fight the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, OHA was delayed in releasing its annual Climate and Health in Oregon report, and its final report on the impacts of climate change on youth mental health and depression in Oregon. Both reports are expected to be published in Spring 2022. The OCAP Coalition is grateful to OHA leadership and its staff for its tireless work to protect Oregonians during this unprecedented time.



**“When workers speak out, they’re often met with hostility, sometimes fired for speaking up. It is crucial for the excessive heat rules to have language requiring employers to provide accessible shade and cool, clean water for workers...These two rulemakings will have significant impacts on workers exposed to wildfire smoke and excessive heat.”**

*– Reyna Lopez, Executive Director, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN).*



## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS**

Strong enforcement of Oregon OSHA’s forthcoming heat and smoke rules will be key to ensuring that employers are adequately implementing protective measures. The OCAP coalition will continue advocating to ensure that Oregon OSHA takes needed enforcement measures, including retaliation protections for workers who advocate for their rights.

In addition, Oregon OSHA currently does not have the authority to require work stoppages, even in extremely hazardous and life-threatening climate conditions. The legislature must act to ensure that no worker is forced to choose between their health and their paycheck, by:

- Granting authority to Oregon OSHA to prohibit work in certain extreme air quality and temperature conditions;
- Creating a worker relief fund to compensate workers who are unable to work due to climate hazards.
- Providing funding to ensure Oregon OSHA has adequate resources and staff to effectively implement the new heat and smoke rules.

**“Little to no shade and no breaks for a long period of time.”**

*– Anonymous complaint registered to Oregon OSHA alleging that roofing and sheet metal workers on a job site in Klamath Falls were working in triple-digit heat and poor air quality due to wildfire smoke.*



# CONCLUSION

The OCAP Coalition is proud of the victories we've achieved through our advocacy and partnership with Governor Brown, state agencies, and the legislature. Together, these actions create a critical pathway to decarbonize Oregon's electricity, industrial, buildings, and transportation sectors and maximize the climate potential of our natural and working lands.

Oregon must continue to build on the progress of the past year. Critically, decision-makers must act to ensure that the transition off fossil fuels happens at the pace and scale necessary to achieve what science tells us is necessary to protect a healthy, resilient Oregon for future generations. At the same time, additional policies are needed to increase equity and ensure that all Oregonians have equal access to benefit from the clean energy transition.

Over the coming year, we will work to advance progress on the following:

- Promote healthier communities by increasing energy efficiency and electrification to rein in fossil gas use in homes, commercial buildings, and industry.
- Prioritize investments in electric, safe, affordable and accessible transportation options to reduce harmful externalities such as tailpipe pollution and death and injury to cyclists and pedestrians, and build an equitable transportation system.
- Expand regulations to fully cover pollution from all major stationary sources of pollution, including fossil fueled power plants and major industrial facilities.
- Formally adopt state goals and advance policies to maximize carbon sequestration by Oregon's natural and working lands, including new rules, regulations, and investments in climate-smart management practices.
- Significantly cut transportation pollution through the adoption of an ambitious Clean Fuels Program expansion and new requirements for zero-emission sales.
- Better integrate the social cost of carbon and performance-based ratemaking, to ensure key climate and efficiency metrics are incorporated into utility planning.
- Advance regulatory tools to ensure the most cost-effective, most prudent and least risky pathway to achieve deep decarbonization of the fossil gas sector.
- Invest in community-owned solar, storage, and microgrids to provide local economic benefits and help increase climate resiliency.
- Ensure that no worker is forced to choose between their health and their paycheck, by prohibiting work in certain extreme air quality and temperature conditions and compensating workers who are unable to work due to climate hazards.

This is our moment to build a new economy with justice and prosperity for every community and a livable planet for future generations. Our organizations and the broader OCAP Coalition are eager to continue working with policymakers in Oregon to accelerate our transition to a clean energy economy, benefit Oregon families and working people, improve health outcomes, lift up frontline communities, and help to ensure our economy and communities are more resilient.





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