

# Perseverance and Action

**2021-2022 Impact Report**



Oregon  
Environmental  
Council

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Oregon Environmental Council  
envisions a future in which  
all people in Oregon have equitable  
access to the benefits of clean air,  
pure and abundant water,  
a user-friendly and low-carbon  
transportation system, a healthy  
climate, and resilient communities.

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Philip Wu, MD  
Board President

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and I’m as  
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ever to the work.**  
”

## Dear Friend of Oregon’s Environment,

Looking back from the standpoint of today, it’s easy to be nostalgic for a time when things felt more secure. The insecurity of the past two years has been challenging, to say the least, but the challenges have shed a new light on the importance of our work. Two of the things I’ve always loved about Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is our perseverance, and our understanding that protecting the environment is also, fundamentally, about protecting people.

Over the past year, climate change fueled more extreme heat waves, wildfires, and drought. And though the impacts of these catastrophes were felt by everyone in Oregon, they were not experienced equally. Just as the pandemic further exposed the weaknesses and inequities of our infrastructure and social systems, so do environmental threats.

Rather than retreat, OEC looked squarely at the environmental destruction, the political instability, and the inequity, and *we got motivated*. With your support, we turned out hundreds to state agency rulemakings and joined broad coalitions in the state capitol to deliver new protections for the people in Oregon most vulnerable to climate threats. We advocated for a climate budget with tens of millions allocated for resilient communities, investments in natural infrastructure, and more.

These wins were made possible by our tenacity and by the recognition that much can be accomplished at the intersections of our core areas of expertise—climate, toxics, transportation, and water. When we put more clean fuels into our transportation system, for example, we get reduced climate pollution. We also get cleaner neighborhoods and better health.

Looking forward, I’m heartened by the advances we’ve made during these difficult times, and I’m as committed as ever to the work. The next few years will be decisive for our environment and communities. Time is short, yet time remains to prevent the worst effects of climate change, and in doing so, protect the people and the places we love.

**Let’s get it done together.**

Phil Wu, MD  
Oregon Environmental Council  
Board President



# 2021-2022 Impact at a Glance

## First ever state climate budget:

**\$60  
million**

to decarbonize buildings and transportation.

**\$40  
million**

for resilient natural and working lands and healthy homes.



Expanded producer responsibility programs to hold manufacturers accountable.



Advanced the strongest rules in the nation to protect workers from climate impacts like extreme heat and smoke.



Supported overtime pay for farmworkers.



Advanced the Resilient and Efficient Buildings Task Force.



Championed the Climate Protection Program—requiring oil and gas companies to cut climate pollution by 90%.



Backed new protections for renters from extreme heat.

## Community Impact

**Connected  
600+ people  
with state reps**

from LaPine, Bend, Medford, Ashland, Roseburg, Florence, and Bandon.

**Participated  
in 30 unique  
coalitions,**

commissions, and committees serving communities across the state.

**Hosted  
250 business  
leaders**

to involve and inform participants on environmental issues.

**Reached  
50,000  
followers**

and subscribers on social media and by email.

**Our solutions result in a healthy, vibrant,  
equitable, and resilient Oregon.**

Our high impact goals are built on evidence-based research and informed by the lived experiences of environmental justice and other impacted communities. Our multi-issue agenda—climate protection, transportation solutions, toxic-free environments, and clean and plentiful water—creates livable communities, a sustainable economy, and resilient landscapes.

# Action at the State Capitol

OEC shines when it comes to statewide leadership. We can deliver big solutions because we have the expertise and the relationships that allow us to get to the root of issues and discover innovative, inclusive, system-level solutions.

## Achievements in the 2022 Oregon legislative session

**Read  
more:**



### **We defended against harmful proposals.**

For example, we defeated a bill that would have unraveled decades of successful land use planning.

### **We're connecting water quality with water quantity.**

Neither can be fixed in a silo, so we're closing loopholes and winning more resources for regulatory agencies.

### **We helped win a Resilient and Efficient Buildings Taskforce.**

In Oregon, buildings are the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. The REBuilding Task Force will create policy recommendations for efficient, healthy, and affordable buildings in the 2023 legislative session.

### **We're hitting doubles: protecting people and the environment.**

We helped pass policies (emergency heat relief for low-income families and heat pump installations for healthy, efficient homes) that reduce pollution and prioritize protections for, and investments in, people and communities most at risk.

### **We delivered state investment on the issues our members care about most:**

- Clean vehicles and EV charging
- Pollinator protection
- Agricultural land preservation
- Drought resilience for ecosystem protection

# Working Together Across the State

OEC connects with people, organizations, and coalitions across the state to advocate for environmental policy solutions that work for all who call Oregon home. The positive impacts of our work stretch from the high desert to the coast and from Portland to Ashland.

Just as individuals from across the state support our work, we strive to positively impact all who live in Oregon—no matter their zip code. We listen to Oregon’s communities and partner with them to create on-the-ground projects that deliver tangible local benefits.



Engaged policy leaders from **Eugene, Bend, Madras, Salem, Roseburg,** and **Medford** to explore access to transportation options like public transit and e-bikes. In 2023, we will advocate for new incentives that can help make e-bikes more affordable for people living on lower-incomes statewide.



Deployed electric utility vehicles in **Deschutes, Hood River,** and **Jefferson** counties that are helping irrigation districts monitor hundreds of miles of canals and pipelines. These vehicles are lowering climate emissions, saving the districts money, cutting down on noise pollution, and eliminating the exposure of their “ditch riders” to gasoline fumes.



Worked with residents of Hacienda CDC’s affordable housing communities in **NE Portland** who are concerned about hazardous chemicals in cleaning products. We provided Eco-Healthy Home cleaning kits, gift certificates, and pamphlets in English and Spanish that included “recipes” for affordable and healthier alternatives. **In a follow-up survey, every respondent reported fewer headaches and feeling noticeably better using these products.**



Celebrated a landmark bipartisan investment by the 2021 State Legislature to protect water sources with a state representative on his **Harney County** farm. OEC partnered with **rural legislators and other environmentalists to secure this funding that will help protect against extreme drought in the future.**



## Our success depends on our statewide collaboration.

We are proud to work in inclusive, broad-based coalitions for new statewide public policies to protect our climate, water, and health. These partnerships transcend city and county boundaries and conventional ideological or political divides to provide statewide benefits.

# Defending and Safeguarding the Future

Protecting the future also means keeping a watchful eye on the successes of the past. When attempts are made to undo, undermine, or otherwise subvert environmental policy, we are there to push back. Some of our most important work is keeping good laws on the books.

## TOXIC-FREE KIDS ACT

When American Apparel, the Toy Association, and its member coalition Safe to Play, filed a lawsuit during the week of Christmas challenging the Toxic-Free Kids Act (TFKA), OEC was at the ready. We quickly notified key allies and legislators, briefed reporters on the importance of these sensible protections for kids, and closely tracked the legal process.

Fortunately, the courts found no merit in the initial request to halt the program and we are ready to continue defending these essential protections as needed at the final hearing later this year.

**Read more:**



## CLIMATE PROTECTION PROGRAM

Big oil and methane gas companies are fighting against climate action and recently sued to roll back the Climate Protection Program. OEC was ready, and we joined the fight immediately. Then, when some of these same fossil fuel companies went to the state asking permission to charge ratepayers to give pay raises to their executives, finance fossil fuel infrastructure expansion, and bankroll their lobbying efforts, OEC was there with our partners to put a stop to it.

Legal challenges and rule makings are sometimes the most important part of environmental policy work. OEC is proud to shine a bright light on dubious actions undermining the public interest and to deliver sound reasoning and evidence to ensure these critical policies keep working for Oregon's people.

**Read more:**



# Advocating for Our Shared Values

Our coalition of supporters ensures we can bring ambitious new ideas to the table and work hand-in-hand with our partners, state agencies, and other stakeholders to enact policies that deliver results.

## ✓ **Climate Protection Program** Powerful climate action



In response to calls from OEC, our partners, and over **7,600 comments from the public**, the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) adopted the **Climate Protection Program** in December 2021. The CPP is one of Oregon's **biggest climate actions ever** because it mandates **statewide pollution reductions**, including from previously unregulated sectors.

## Key highlights of the Climate Protection Program

} **Investments in clean energy projects that will generate jobs, grow the economy, and provide cheaper, healthier energy.**

} **Science-based emissions targets, with a goal of 50% reduction in pollution by 2035 and 90% by 2050.**

} **Improved public health and resiliency for communities in Oregon most harmed by fossil fuel emissions.**

} **With the adoption of the Climate Protection Program, Oregon is one of only five other states to have a multi-sector emissions reduction program.**

# Impact Where It Matters Most

Our advocacy this year focused on impactful state agency rulemaking processes—successful outcomes for workers, climate, electric vehicles, and land use planning.



## ✓ **Advanced Clean Trucks Rules** Securing a Clean Truck Corridor for the West Coast

**ADOPTED**

Often fleet owners say that they can't find a zero-emissions model for the trucks, buses, or vans they need. Adopted in November, these rules require manufacturers to **increase the percentage of zero-emissions medium and heavy-duty trucks** they sell. Beginning in 2024, the rules will set tougher standards to reduce toxic emissions from the remaining fossil fuel powered vehicles. California and Washington already have these rules in place. Oregon stepping up has created a clean truck corridor for the West Coast.



## ✓ **Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities** Land Use for a Better Future

**ADOPTED**

Newly adopted rules within the Department of Land Conservation and Development require Oregon's larger cities and towns to focus new growth in concentrated areas, creating more walkable and transit friendly neighborhoods.



## ✓ **Electric Vehicle Rebates** Clean Driving for All

**EXPANDED**

In May, the EQC updated the Electric Vehicle Rebate program, which expands incentives for low- and moderate-income households by an additional \$2,500, totaling up to \$7,500 in possible rebates for new and used hybrids and electric vehicles.

# The Power of Persistence

Passing laws can take years. It takes years more to ensure that those laws deliver on their potential. For the Clean Fuels Program, OEC has been there since the beginning and we are still there, working to make it even better.

**The Clean Fuels Program**, which OEC championed, is signed into law but with an automatic five year “sunset”.

2009

OEC keeps **advocating in Salem**; serves on state advisory committees to keep the program moving forward.

2014

OEC and allies **convince lawmakers** to extend the program indefinitely.

2015

The oil industry **files lawsuits**—including one that went to the Supreme Court. OEC intervenes and helps keep the program in place.

2015

The oil industry **stalls implementation for five years**, spends \$1.6M, and becomes the #1 lobbying force in 2013, hoping the law would expire.

2009-13

**6.5M tons** (and counting!) ▶  
the amount of climate pollution removed from the atmosphere thanks to the Clean Fuels Program

2016

The Clean Fuels Program **finally goes into effect** immediately creating hundreds of jobs and benefiting small businesses and transit agencies!

2022



**Thirteen years later**, the Clean Fuels Program is a statewide success, helping 30+ Oregon nonprofits and community organizations, small towns, and business fleets find alternatives to the high cost of oil while cleaning the air.

# Policy that Supports People

Because of the Clean Fuels Program, community organizations are able to save money on gas and maintenance, and instead funnel more funding toward their missions to serve the people who call Oregon home.

Community-focused organizations like **Brown Hope**, **Clackamas Service Center**, and **Meals on Wheels** can cost-effectively continue to deliver food to their constituents thanks to Oregon's Clean Fuels Program, which has provided funding for electric delivery vehicles. The **Native American Rehabilitation Association**, which provides mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and social services to Native Americans who are experiencing homelessness or have low incomes, now has five EVs to ensure clients can get to key service providers. In Woodburn, parents in low-income households can rest easier knowing they can count on a 19-passenger EVStar to safely shuttle their children to and from a local relief nursery run by **Family Building Blocks**. (Children are particularly vulnerable to diesel pollution and EVs have zero tailpipe emissions.)

Clean Fuels Program grants have also benefited rural communities and small businesses, including via two grants OEC secured that enabled small independent auto repair shops owned by people of color and women to stay competitive by purchasing EVs for use as customer loaner cars, while their service techs receive training on EV repair. In Central Oregon, three irrigation districts (Farmers, North Unit, and Swalley) received electric utility service vehicles that are being used along hundreds of miles of irrigation canal and pipelines to monitor and quickly repair any leaks.

**\$1.00/gallon** is about the cost to refuel electric vehicles—plus they don't require oil changes!



**Today, the program is poised to expand further—creating more opportunities to cut climate and air pollution** while funding more worthwhile community-based projects. For OEC and service organizations throughout Oregon, this process served as a reminder that good things are worth fighting—and waiting—for.

# Policy That Saves Lives

Climate change fueled disasters, like extreme weather and wildfires, are magnifying the connections between human health and a healthy environment. This year, OEC and our partners demanded action to protect Oregon's most vulnerable workers from extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

In 2021, 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. Heat exhaustion also claimed the lives of construction workers and increased the risk of death and injury for countless other workers and elderly individuals.

The heat dome, as it was called, brought new urgency to ongoing work OEC and our partners were already doing to secure protections for workers from the worst effects of climate change. Specifically, OEC, Northwest Workers Justice Project, and the farmworker's union Pinos Y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), had already been engaged in efforts to persuade the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to implement emergency protections for workers from extreme heat and wildfire smoke. Within two months of the heat dome and its tragic effects, emergency rules were put into place.

Six months later, with continued pressure from OEC and our coalition, the emergency rules—the **strongest in the nation**—were made permanent.

## Common Sense Safeguards

- **Access to shade, water, etc.** for all workers (indoor and outdoor) when the heat index reaches 80 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **When the heat index reaches 90**, workers receive additional paid breaks every two hours and managers must actively monitor workers for signs of heat illness or create a buddy system.
- **When the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 201** (very unhealthy), employers must provide N95 respirators to their employees.
- **At 500 AQI** (hazardous) a complete respiratory protection program is required.

We appreciate the many businesses, agencies, and organizations who are welcoming the new rules.



“ Farmworkers and front-line workers endure the most extreme conditions brought by climate change. Extreme heat, unhealthy air quality, and wildfires correspond to peak harvest times for farm work. PCUN deeply appreciates the partnership with OEC. Our collaborative efforts led to Oregon adopting the strongest worker protections in the nation. We look forward to continuing to work together to develop policies protecting front-line communities. ”

— Ira Cuello Martinez, Policy Advocacy Director, PCUN

# A Sustainable and Resilient Water Future for Oregon

In Oregon and in the West, the importance of water cannot be overstated. As we work to create a climate-resilient future, **water quality** and **quantity** are two pieces of the same puzzle. Policy must be implemented that solves for both pieces at the same time.

## Saving Water

In our rural and water work, partnerships and creative collaborations yield real-world solutions that make the most of limited resources while establishing examples for others to follow.

### IMPACT

This year, with support from the **Tyler Foundation**, we partnered with the **Farmers Irrigation District** (FID) to meet the water needs of **Hood River Valley's** orchardists, which produce \$260 million in revenues from apples, peaches, pears, and cherries, and deliver more water back to the Hood River, home to endangered cutthroat and steelhead trout.

FID installed automated water monitoring equipment (“telemetry”) that will send and receive data about water levels to the district headquarters. This remote monitoring will reduce the time and miles driven to monitoring locations and allow more accurate adjustments to water flows in the system, leaving millions more gallons of cold, clean, water in the river.

## Momentum ▶▶▶ Let's Keep Going

In 2021, the Oregon legislature allocated money to help farmers and ranchers deal with drought. In 2022, OEC and partners advocated for—and won—funding for broader drought relief and forward-looking drought resilience planning. The funding that passed the legislature also included money for enforcement in response to illegal water usage in marijuana operations—which will help conserve water and cut back on waste.

### A Recipe for Success: Sustainable, Coordinated Water Management

- Oregon's state water planning and management must be coordinated across agency and regulatory silos.
- Water management decisions, policies, and programs should be informed by publicly available, accurate data for ground and surface water.
- Water use policies and regulations must be flexible enough to permit creative problem-solving to meet regional and local needs without harming the resource.

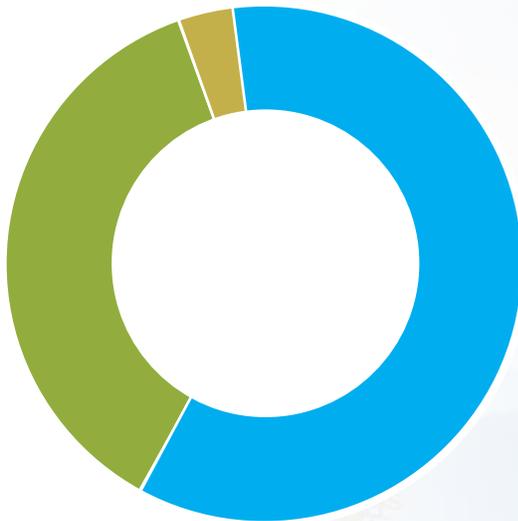
# Your Support Powers Action

**FY 2021-2022**

April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022



## Revenue Sources



- Grants
- Individual Donations
- Corporate Sponsors

## Allocation of Revenue



- Climate Protection
- Transportation
- Clean & Plentiful Water
- Toxic-Free Environment
- Fundraising
- Management & General



# Members are a Powerful Force for Positive Change

In FY 2021-2022:

“ I am grateful to OEC for fighting hard to protect Oregon’s beautiful environment. The staff is passionate about and deeply committed to pushing the needle and making the biggest positive impact they can on Oregon’s environment. Thank you, OEC, for advocating to protect Oregon’s natural beauty for generations to come. ”

— *Juliáe Riva,*  
2020 and 2021 OEC intern

**25% increase**  
in individual member contributions

**6% increase**  
in Evergreen Society memberships  
(monthly donors)

**\$65,000**  
from Evergreen members to support OEC’s work

**50% increase**  
in individuals giving \$1,000+ annually



“ With the effects of climate change worsening and increasing each day, the mental health of young people in Oregon is being negatively impacted now more than ever. **It felt incredibly empowering and important to be able to work with OEC to amplify a diverse set of youth voices and experiences and to make sure that young Oregonians are heard and know that they are not alone in the climate crisis.** ”

— *Eliza Garcia,*  
Youth Climate Activist

## **Oregon Environmental Council**

champions equitable, innovative,  
and collaborative solutions to  
Oregon's environmental challenges  
for today and future generations.



**Oregon  
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