

An Open Letter from Oregon Climate Change Scientists

February 1st, 2016

Dear Governor Brown and Oregon State Legislators,

As scientists from Oregon with expertise in many disciplines relevant to the understanding of climate change, its impacts, and its solutions, we are deeply concerned that climate change compromises our quality of life and threatens our state's future. We need your leadership now more than ever to reduce the risks of a dangerously warming climate.

The science is clear that human activity is the dominant cause of warming over the last half century.¹ If global heat-trapping emissions continue to rise, the scope and severity of risks will accelerate. Already Oregonians are addressing many threats from climate change. For example, we are facing changes in water availability brought on by smaller snowpack and earlier snowmelt; our forests and related industries are threatened from increasing wildfires, insect outbreaks, and tree diseases; and our coastal communities are impacted by rising sea levels and increasing ocean acidity.²

We must adapt to the inevitable impacts of a changing climate by investing in communities to make them more prepared for the current impacts and future risks of climate change. At the same time, Oregon must also take appropriate steps to reduce heat-trapping emissions that would cause much more devastating consequences in the decades to come. Oregon is well positioned to tackle this challenge. **Our state already has a legislatively established goal to reduce heat-trapping emissions to 75 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. We ask that you adopt policies to ensure Oregon reaches this emission reduction target.**

Now is the time to take action. The emissions choices we make today—in Oregon and throughout the world—will shape the planet our children and grandchildren inherit. Please help create a cleaner, safer, and healthier future for Oregon. Let this be our legacy.

¹ Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Working Group I Contribution to the IPCC 5th Assessment Report - Changes to the Underlying Scientific/Technical Assessment. 2013. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Available online at <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1>

² Mote, P., A. K. Snover, S. Capalbo, S. D. Eigenbrode, P. Glick, J. Littell, R. Raymondi, and S. Reeder, 2014: Ch. 21: Northwest. Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment, J. M. Melillo, Terese (T.C.) Richmond, and G. W. Yohe, Eds., U.S. Global Change Research Program, 487-513. doi:10.7930/J04Q7RWX.

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The signers of this letter are scientists and researchers who live or work in Oregon and hold a Ph.D. All signers have expertise relevant to our understanding of climate change, its impacts, or solutions. Institutional affiliations are provided for purposes of identification and do not imply endorsement of the letter by those institutions.

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