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Oregon Restores Landmark Climate Protection Program, Setting Example for the Nation

Broad coalition helps deliver community investments to those hit hardest by the climate crisis.

Hillsboro, OR. In a monumental step forward for state-based climate action, the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) unanimously voted today to restore Oregon’s landmark Climate Protection Program. This crucial policy will require Oregon’s largest polluters to significantly reduce harmful climate pollution while fostering clean energy innovations for decades to come.

With Governor Tina Kotek’s leadership and collaboration between state agencies, the new rules solidify the state’s role in delivering environmental progress in the face of federal rollbacks promised by the second Trump administration. The [Coalition for Climate and Economic Justice](#) (CCEJ) hailed the vote as a significant step toward a healthier, more sustainable future for Oregon.

“Oregon’s actions today are a beacon of hope,” said Jana Gastellum, Executive Director of the Oregon Environmental Council. “Every state deserves a program like the Climate Protection Program to not only cut pollution but also generate funds for community projects and business innovation. It’s a win for the people, especially those in frontline communities who’ve long been impacted by climate change.”

Under the Climate Protection Program, Oregon’s largest polluters – oil companies, gas utilities, and large industrial facilities – must gradually reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The restored program will cut 90% of climate pollution through a phased rollout. “This will help us tackle our biggest pollution sources, improve our air quality, and create more clean energy jobs,” said Meredith Connolly, Director of Policy and Strategy at Climate Solutions.

With restored protections in place, Oregonians are ultimately poised to receive tens of millions of dollars to help combat climate change. The Climate Protection Program goes beyond current pollution rules by directing fossil fuel funds to impacted communities. “Finally, polluters will have to pay for their harms, and that money will protect those hit hardest by the climate crisis,” said Joel Iboa, Executive Director of Oregon Just Transition Alliance. This includes low-income, Indigenous, coastal, rural, and communities of color across Oregon, with 15% of the funds specifically earmarked for federally recognized Tribes and Tribal communities.

The rules are set up so that communities who live with climate harm benefit the most from clean energy investments. “This holds polluters accountable while uplifting community-led solutions,” said Xitlali Torres, Air Quality and Climate Program Coordinator at Verde. “It directly addresses the harmful pollution that burdens low-income communities of color while building cleaner air, safer homes, and a livable future for all.”

Oregon’s new climate rules will also deliver significant economic growth. “Last year, clean energy jobs grew twice as fast as the overall economy,” said Gastellum. “Oregon’s leadership is an invitation and blueprint for other states to keep moving forward.”

Tim Miller, Director of Oregon Business for Climate, praised the program’s ability to balance environmental protections with business concerns. “We applaud the EQC for reinstating this critical program,” he said. “The Climate Protection Program positions Oregon for leadership in the growing clean energy economy by driving innovation and creating opportunities for business and job growth.”

Most importantly, the newly adopted rules will hold industries accountable for their pollution in Oregon. Carra Sahler, J.D., Director and Staff Attorney at the Green Energy Institute at Lewis & Clark Law School, emphasized that the program’s simple and efficient design “will significantly cut greenhouse gasses and other pollutants that harm health, making it a critical tool to improve Oregon’s air quality.”

“With polluters set to get a free pass under another Trump administration, Oregon has flipped the script by restoring this forward-thinking program to protect our environment and hold polluters accountable,” said Lindsey Scholten, Executive Director at Oregon League of Conservation Voters.

By restoring the Climate Protection Program, Oregon is taking a key step in its commitment to fight climate change, ensuring a healthier future for all residents while positioning the state as a global leader in clean energy and climate justice.

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