

The Threat of Carbon Pollution: Oregon

We have a moral obligation to leave our children a planet that's not polluted or damaged, and by taking an all-of-the-above approach to develop homegrown energy and steady, responsible steps to cut carbon pollution, we can protect our kids' health and begin to slow the effects of climate change so we leave a cleaner, more stable environment for future generations. Climate change impacts including severe weather, asthma attacks, prolonged allergy seasons, and sea-level rise are affecting our security, our economy, and our communities. In 2012 alone, the cost of weather disasters exceeded \$110 billion in the United States, and climate change will only increase the frequency and intensity of these events. Today, we already set limits for arsenic, mercury and lead, but we impose no limits on how much carbon pollution our power plants release. Carbon pollution is contributing to a higher risk of asthma attacks and more frequent and severe storms, floods, heat waves, and wildfires, driving up food prices and threatening our communities. The President's plan is a comprehensive approach to cutting the pollution that causes climate change and threatens public health, setting us on a path to make our communities healthier, safer, and more resilient.

THE IMPACT OF POLLUTION AND EXTREME WEATHER IN OREGON

In 2011, power plants and major industrial facilities in Oregon emitted more than 10 million metric tons of carbon pollution—that's equal to the yearly pollution from more than 2 million cars.

Recent incidents provide a reminder of the impacts to our public health and costs due to extreme weather in Oregon. Although we cannot say that climate change is responsible for any individual event, climate change is already increasing our risks from these events.

- Higher winter temperatures are causing more precipitation to fall as rain instead of snow. This is depleting snowpack, which is increasing competition for freshwater between people, salmon, and hydroelectricity. While there was above average snowfall for many locations in the Northwest in 2012, Oregon experienced the third smallest winter and spring snow cover footprints on record.
- In Oregon, there were over 2,000 hospital admissions for asthma in 2011, with an average charge of over \$14,000 for each stay.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture designated 23 counties in Oregon as natural disaster areas due to losses and damage from freezing temperatures, snow accumulation, and freezing rain in 2008.

ANTICIPATED CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS IN THE NORTHWEST

Climate change is already impacting coastal cities, water supplies, wildfires, and natural resources in the Northwest. Snowpack is projected to decline by as much as 40 percent in the Cascades in the next 30 years, and hotter and drier landscapes will increase the risk of forest fires. Overall, the West has experienced a nearly fourfold increase in large wildfires in recent decades, leading to respiratory illnesses and other harm from fire-related air pollution. Increased insect outbreaks and changing species composition will present additional challenges for forest products industries. Decreasing

summer stream flows will reduce hydroelectric generation capacity, which currently accounts for 70 percent of the region's electricity supply. Meanwhile, rising temperatures will increase electricity demand for air conditioning and refrigeration, adding more stress on the electricity system and resulting in more carbon pollution. One third of current streams may be too warm to support salmon by the end of the century, further impacting the region's fishing industry. Sea-level rise will increase coastal erosion, increasing the vulnerability of property, tourism, and livelihoods in the heavily populated Puget Sound area.

CUTTING CARBON POLLUTION AND INCREASING RESILIENCE IN OREGON

Climate change is a long-term problem, but we can make substantial progress through a series of steady and responsible steps. The President's plan builds from progress already underway to work with states, local communities, and the private sector to reduce carbon pollution and to prepare our Nation for the impacts that cannot be avoided. Since 2009, President Obama has taken a number of common sense measures to combat carbon pollution, including:

- ***Investing in Clean Energy:*** During the President's first term, the United States more than doubled its use of renewable energy from wind, solar, and geothermal sources. In Oregon, renewable energy generation from these sources increased more than 90 percent. Since 2009, the Administration has supported tens of thousands of renewable energy projects throughout the country, including more than 1,700 in Oregon, generating enough energy to power more than 340,000 homes and helping Oregon meet its own goal of generating 25 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025.
- ***Improving Efficiency:*** Using less energy to power our homes, businesses and vehicles is critical to building a clean and secure energy future. President Obama has made essential investments in research and development for energy efficiency advances, and set new standards to make the things we use every day – from cars to microwaves – more efficient.
 - President Obama established the toughest fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles in U.S. history. These standards will double the fuel efficiency of our cars and trucks by 2025, saving the average driver more than \$8,000 over the lifetime of a 2025 vehicle and cutting carbon pollution.
 - Since October 2009, the Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have jointly completed energy upgrades in more than one million homes across the country, saving many families more than \$400 on their heating and cooling bills in the first year alone.
 - As part of the President's Better Buildings Challenge, Beaverton AND Hillsboro committed to reducing energy intensity 20 percent by 2020 in a combined 2.08 million square feet of its buildings. Portland Public School District committed to the same reduction for its 8 million square feet of school buildings.
- ***Preparing Communities for the Consequences of Climate Change:*** The Obama Administration has worked since its earliest days to strengthen the Nation's resilience to climate change impacts, including investing in critical science and tools, developing the first-ever Federal agency climate adaptation plans, and directly partnering with communities. For example with support from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has developed a partnership with local health departments to study local and state climate change impacts and associated health concerns, as well as develop adaptation plans to protect the health of their communities.