







Senate Bill 1534

Increasing Carbon Sequestration on Oregon's Natural and Working Lands



Oregon's natural and working lands — including forests, grasslands, rangelands, farmlands, tidal and subtidal wetlands, and the parks and open spaces in urban environments — provide a range of environmental, social, health, and economic benefits statewide, including opportunities to increase net carbon sequestration and storage and reduce Oregon's overall greenhouse gas emissions.

Implementing practices that increase net sequestration and storage of carbon on Oregon's natural and working lands and through the products they produce provides significant co-benefits to Oregon's communities and land managers, for example:

-  Planting trees in urban areas reduces heat island effects and improves air quality.
-  Restoring coastal wetlands improves fish habitat and helps protect coastal communities from storm surges.
-  Implementing climate-smart farming practices increases soil productivity and moisture-holding capacity.
-  Advancing forest management practices that increase sequestration will also increase long-term fiber supplies.
-  Practices that improve the resilience of fire-prone forests helps avoid greenhouse gas emissions and smoke resulting from wildfires.
-  Investing across these practices creates jobs, generates increased revenue for private land managers, reduces energy and health care costs, and improves Oregonians' quality of life.

The State can play an important role in helping land managers interested in voluntarily adopting such practices by investing in incentives to cover transition costs and technical assistance.

In 2021, the Oregon Global Warming Commission engaged Tribes, landowners and managers, federal and state agencies, conservation organizations, environmental justice leaders, technical assistance providers, and scientists to inform the development of the [2021 OGWC Natural and Working Lands Proposal](#). In total, we heard from more than 1,000 individuals and organizations (see below) regarding the strategies and considerations that should be included in designing policy, practice, and investment frameworks.



Senate Bill 1534 would advance several foundational recommendations from the proposal, by:

- Defining natural and working lands (N&WL) in Oregon statute.
- Declaring that it is the policy of the State to advance N&WL strategies that are designed based on equity and land manager interests and resourced with incentives and technical assistance support.

- Directing the Commission to create an Advisory Group to inform its N&WL efforts including the provisions included in the bill.
- Directing the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University to support the Commission in the: (a) development of metrics and a baseline; (b) advancement of a N&WL carbon inventory; and (c) completion of a N&WL Workforce and Economic Development study.
- Directing agencies to report on metrics and the inventory.
- Changing the Commission’s deadline for its Biennial Report to the Legislature and adding responsibility for reporting on progress toward the N&WL targets and metrics.

Public Involvement in Development of the N&WL Proposal

The Oregon Global Warming Commission used an inclusive and transparent process to inform the development of the N&WL Proposal, providing opportunities for broad public engagement across the State and in collaboration with other Boards and Commissions.



The process involved:

- Coordinating with relevant Boards and Commissions and the State/Tribal Natural Resources Work Group;
- Providing opportunities for public comments on the development of the Natural and Working Lands Proposal at 10 Oregon Global Warming Commission meetings from December 2019 to August 2021;
- Hosting a targeted survey that received input from 737 individuals, including 461 identifying themselves as landowners and managers. This survey was used to gather information on current practices related to carbon sequestration, as well as incentives, opportunities, and barriers for adopting new practices;
- Convening eight focus groups to make sure we were interpreting the survey input correctly, and gather additional, more in-depth insights to inform the recommendations. Ninety-six individuals participated, including landowner and manager interest groups, landowners, technical assistance providers, conservation organizations, and Environmental Justice leaders. Four groups were organized by region – Coast, Willamette Valley, Southern Oregon, Eastern Oregon – and included a cross-section of landowners and managers, technical assistance providers, and conservation organizations; and
- Providing opportunities for input through a general outreach survey posted on the Commission website from January to April 2021. This survey focused on opportunities and barriers to increasing net carbon sequestration in Oregon. A total of 122 individuals responded to the survey.

