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Coalition of State and National Groups Files Intervention to Defend Oregon's Climate Protection Program Against Oil and Gas Industry Attack

Salem, OR - A coalition of environmental justice, climate, and business organizations today filed a legal intervention to defend Oregon's landmark Climate Protection Program (CPP) against attempted oil and gas industry rollbacks.

The CPP is a cornerstone Oregon climate protection policy and essential to [achieving the state's climate pollution reduction goals](#), according to recent modeling led by the Oregon Department of Energy. The program will also:

- Improve public health and resiliency for Oregon communities most harmed by fossil fuels and climate impacts, saving billions of dollars annually in avoided health costs.
- Enable investments in clean energy projects to support job creation, economic vitality, and cleaner, cheaper, healthier energy and transportation options in communities of color, Tribal, low-income, rural, coastal and other communities across the state.
- Incentivize technological innovation and advancement that will benefit Oregon's workers and consumers by transitioning to a clean energy economy.

The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) adopted the CPP in December 2021 following an extensive 18 month rulemaking and robust stakeholder engagement process. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received more than 7,600 public comments on the CPP rules, the overwhelming majority of which were in favor of the program and strong climate protections. The CPP requires oil companies and fossil gas utilities in Oregon to reduce their emissions 50 percent by 2035 and 90 percent by 2050; establishes first-ever requirements for major industrial facilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and enables millions of dollars annually to be invested in clean energy projects that benefit environmental justice and other communities across Oregon.

Fossil fuel and other industry groups attempting to delay climate action have filed three separate suits attacking the program. NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas, Western States Petroleum Association, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Business & Industry Association, and Associated Oregon Loggers are among more than a dozen industry petitioners challenging DEQ and the EQC's authority to adopt the CPP rules. Intervenors in the case include Beyond Toxics, Oregon Business for Climate, Oregon Environmental Council, Climate Solutions, and Environmental Defense Fund, all represented by the non-profit Crag Law Center, and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

"Oregon's vulnerable communities have first-hand experience of the suffering and hardship caused by the climate crisis," noted **Teryn Yazdani, Staff Attorney and Climate Policy Manager at Beyond Toxics**. "If left untouched by fossil fuel industry opposition, the Climate Protection Program has the potential to make a positive difference in the lives of Oregonians through strong emissions reductions. Keeping the Climate Protection Program intact is key to improving public health and resilience for Oregon's environmental justice and frontline communities."

“This is a coordinated act of desperation on behalf of the fossil fuel industry. DEQ facilitated an extensive public engagement process in crafting the CPP rules. These lawsuits are a slap in the face to the will of the people and sound democratic process,” said **Nora Apter, Climate Program Director for the Oregon Environmental Council**. “These companies know what they are selling is a threat to the health and well-being of Oregonians, yet they’re fighting the State so they can continue to prioritize polluter profits over people.”

“This case is yet another example of NW Natural’s double-speak,” said **Greer Ryan, Clean Buildings Policy Manager for Climate Solutions**. “They spend millions of customer dollars advertising their supposed efforts to be climate-friendly. What they don’t want the public to know is that they’re blocking climate progress and suing the State trying to overturn the landmark Climate Protection Program and skirt responsibility for their contribution to the climate crisis.”

The CPP provides clear, predictable, and achievable targets for reducing climate pollution, and complements existing Oregon statute requiring electric utilities to transition Oregon’s electricity grid to 100% clean, emissions-free energy sources by 2040. The electric utilities collaborated in shaping the law governing their emissions reduction responsibilities and are seizing the opportunity to invest in the clean energy technologies of the future. In contrast, the petitioners in this case are digging their heels in to protect outdated, polluting approaches to doing business.

“Forward-looking companies in Oregon see the imperative of climate action, and the opportunity for our state to become a leader in advancing and exporting solutions that the whole world is seeking in the transition to a clean economy,” said **Tim Miller, Director of Oregon Business for Climate**. “This program provides the clear, predictable path businesses need for planning, with multiple flexibility options for the fuel suppliers, ultimately delivering cleaner, healthier, cheaper, and more stable energy options for everyone.”

While the recently-passed Inflation Reduction Act will provide long overdue federal investments and incentives to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, state-level action remains critical to ramping down climate pollution at the pace and scale necessary to avoid climate catastrophe. Oregon’s CPP sets a vital precedent for other states seeking to adopt similar programs to limit climate pollution from top emitters.

“Mounting droughts, wildfires, heat waves and other climate-fueled impacts demand continued leadership from states like Oregon,” said **Kjellen Belcher, U.S. Climate Policy Manager at Environmental Defense Fund**. “Now armed with new investments from the Inflation Reduction Act, Oregon needs to double-down on doing its part to slash harmful climate pollution through a strong Climate Protection Program. We need to defend the state’s progress in building a clean, healthy and resilient economy. And we need to stand up for the thousands of Oregonians who spoke out in support of the Climate Protection Program.”

“Reducing climate pollution demands an all-hands-on-deck effort, one that fully leverages both federal and state action,” said **Angus Duncan, NRDC Northwest Consultant and Chair Emeritus of Oregon’s Global Warming Commission**. “States are crucial for regulating utilities, shaping local transportation choices and enforcing provisions of the Clean Air Act, as Oregon’s under-challenge Climate Protection Program is intended to do. NRDC has good reason to join the national and local Oregon groups intervening to defend Oregon’s carbon cap from the polluting industries resisting the need to ramp down emissions.”
